



La Salle IGBM Newsletter March 2021

Students encouraged to take part in Lasallian Awards

Students at St Simon Stock Catholic School are being encouraged to take part in the Lasallian Awards initiative which has recently been introduced at the school.

The Lasallian Awards work similarly to that of the Duke of Edinburgh Award and Faith in Action Awards which the school organises for older year groups. Students will be asked to complete one activity from each Core Principle to receive the Bronze Award. Students can choose whichever activities they would like to do but they must do one from every category.

Click [here](#) for all the details.



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The activities list (see below) can all be completed at home following government guidelines. If students have an idea for their own category, they can email chaplain Lauren Bassett to get confirmation that it will count.

Once they have completed an activity they will need to take a picture of it or do a write-up on it to use as evidence. Only once they have completed all five activities must they put together all their evidence into one document and attach it on to Microsoft Teams in their Reflection Teams.

Once the information has been received by Ms Bassett the student will receive a badge and their name will go into a prize draw for a £20 Amazon voucher. Then, students will then get the opportunity to go for the Silver Award (three activities from each category) and Gold Award (five activities from each category).

Online Induction Programme concludes in March

February saw the continuation of the Online Lasallian Induction Programme with sessions once again well attended.

Session 3, 'Lasallian Core Principles' was hosted by Edel Nolan and Brian Halpin on Monday February 8th and Thursday February 11th.

The programme will conclude in March with sessions 4 and 5. Tomorrow (Thursday March 4th) will see Mariella Vella deliver the session on 'Lasallian Spirituality' at 11am and 4pm. Session 5 on Wednesday March 24th at 11am and 4pm is entitled 'Lasallian Community' and will be hosted by Br Ben Hanlon and Joe Gilson.

As with other programmes of Lasallian Formation, the Induction Programme is an invitation to a journey of understanding and discovery of who we are as Lasallian educators, what it means to teach and work in a Lasallian school, and our interconnectedness to our global Lasallian Family.

Online Lasallian Induction Programme
Understanding Our Tradition

The Online Lasallian Induction Programme is a series of sessions and resources for new Lasallian educators, offering a journey of understanding and discovery of who we are as Lasallian educators, what it means to teach and work in a Lasallian school, and our interconnectedness to our global Lasallian Family.

Session 1
WELCOME TO THE LASALLIAN FAMILY
Tuesday, December 15 (12:45 PM to 1:30 PM) / Thursday, December 17 (11 AM)

Session 2
LASALLIAN STORY
Wednesday, January 15 (11 AM to 1:30 PM) / Friday, January 17 (11 AM to 1:30 PM)

Session 3
LASALLIAN CORE PRINCIPLES
Monday, February 8 (11 AM to 1:30 PM) / Thursday, February 11 (11 AM to 1:30 PM)

Session 4
LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY
Thursday, March 4 (11 AM to 1:30 PM) / Friday, March 5 (11 AM to 1:30 PM)

Session 5
LASALLIAN COMMUNITY
Wednesday, March 24 (11 AM to 1:30 PM) / Thursday, March 25 (11 AM to 1:30 PM)

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER
we go to <https://v4.ly/751zjaf>

ASSEDIL Gathering takes place at end of March

The ASSEDIL Gathering will take place on March 25th and 26th this year from 9.30am to 11am GMT (10.30am to Noon in Malta) as a way of supporting each other in these difficult times. The theme of this online meeting will be: 'You are part of the Miracle'. This meeting will span two half days, allowing for the sharing of experiences of solidarity during the pandemic and for a

celebratory cross-border get-together. We will keep you updated with details about the programme but here we simply wanted to give you a brief outline of the content of the gathering. This will include:

- How are we experiencing the pandemic - using videos from different Districts illustrating their responses.
- What are our students saying? We will ask them to briefly to speak about their hopes for post-COVID-19, illustrating one thing that they are looking forward to.
- We will have a short presentation from a psychologist speaking about the impact of COVID 19 on young people.
- We will finish with a short Lasallian celebration, using music and other material from the countries of the Region, as a means of encouragement and support.

Here you have the link for registration:

<https://forms.gle/XrcP5XJupXqwEBrx6>

More details of the programme will follow closer to the time.

Updated list of committee members

The members of a number of our committees have been finalised over the past few weeks, with the updated lists as follows:

District MEL Council

- Br. Laurence Hughes - Brother Visitor
- Br. Ben Hanlon - Brother Visitor's Delegate for Mission
- Brian Halpin - MEL Committee, Ireland
- Emma Biggins - MEL Committee, GB
- Mariella Vella - MEL Committee, Malta
- Dr. Aideen Cassidy - District Representative on the ASSEDIL Council
- Stephen Cachia - Director of Educational Mission, La Salle Malta
- Brendan Wall
- Andrew Rannard
- Joe Gilson - Director of Mission

MEL Committee Ireland

- Br. Stephen Deignan
- Brian Halpin (Chairperson)
- Jason Poole (Secretary)
- Br. Patrick Collier (Treasurer)
- Anna Baird
- Martin Brennan
- Br. Martin Curran

- Marie Fitzpatrick
- Br. Ben Hanlon
- Br. Damien Kellegher
- Br. Francis Manning
- Mary McDonagh
- Br. Kevin McEvoy
- Br. Finbarr Murphy
- Edel Nolan
- Joe Twomey
- Siobhan Wyatt

MEL Committee Great Britain

- Emma Biggins - Chair
- Faith Wheat
- Fran Walsh
- Andy Bridson
- Sally Bennett
- Jo Millea
- David Garrido
- Laura Young
- Mike Bennett
- Joe Gilson
- Br. Laurence Hughes

MEL Committee Malta

- Stephen Cachia – Chair
- Mariella Vella
- Manuel Cilia
- Isabel Zahra
- Jacqueline Farrugia
- Br. Austin Gili
- Chris Kenely

District Young Lasallian Council

- Siân Thomas – RELEM Young Lasallian representative (Chair of the Council)
- Joanne Millea – St Helens: De La Salle School
- Cian Ó Náraigh – Dundalk: De La Salle College
- Keely Xuereb – De La Salle College Malta
- Ishmael Cocker – Stella Maris College Malta
- Jason Poole Beneavin De La Salle College: Dublin, Ireland
- Theo Arthur St Joseph's College: Beulah Hill, London
- Isobelle Cording St Cassian's Residential Centre: Kintbury, UK

District Vocation Team

- Brother Martin Curran, FSC
- Heather Ruple Gilson
- Joanne Millea
- Yvonne Joye
- Brother Saviour Gatt, FSC
- Audrey Borg
- David McArdle
-

Malta students show love for our animal friends

At De La Salle College Malta, Junior School, the Animal Awareness Animation Team has come up with a way to encourage students to show they care for animals through the Lasallian Animal Friends Sponsorship Scheme.

The aim is to raise money for local sanctuaries to ensure that they can care for stray dogs and cats on the island.



It is an initiative that they hope others schools will take on board, and is explained in full by Abigail Azzopardi below.

Back in the days, circa late 80s, I recall seeing so many stray cats and dogs roaming our streets. Many skinny and hungry, others running around in packs and yes, I still remember vividly, an abused dog, with a tight rubber collar round its neck which was impossible for anyone from our neighbours to pull out, without the intervention of a vet.

As a young girl, I have no idea what happened to such dogs at the time, but nowadays we all know that many stray cats and dogs have a probability of ending up in one of the many sanctuaries found around Malta, or better still, homed to a loving family thanks to many voluntary activists who take it as their responsibility to find the perfect homes for these unfortunates.

The local stray population issue is still not completely solved, although we must admit that the number of stray dogs has greatly been reduced, and we are a far cry from ever stopping the abuse that these innocent creatures face. Stray cats are still in great numbers but thanks to many feeders

who neuter and feed them we are managing to control the ever increasing colonies and lessening the suffering too.

However, we should also applaud the priceless, daily work, that our animal sanctuaries and NGOs carry out every day. Nowadays, most of the public will not turn a blind eye to a suffering stray, and reporting abuse is only an email (animalwelfare.mafa.gov.mt) or a call away (Animal Welfare - 1717). But where are all these strays ending up? Are they vanishing into thin air? Is it the case of out of sight, out of mind? This is where our local sanctuaries come to the rescue.

Before being admitted to a shelter, an animal will have a vet check, blood tests run, medication assigned and treatment started. Once at the shelter animals will find bedding, safety and good, nutritious food that will help with the recovery process. The cutest will find dotting homes, and once they join their family, they will make space for new strays in need of assistance. Here, I stress the importance of adoption. It is not only teaching us to open our hearts, without ifs and buts to a creature in need, but also indirectly helping a sanctuary make precious space on their premises.

But what happens with the old ones, the unlucky, feral, ugly, and disabled ones? It is more difficult to home them, so our 'No Kill' shelters offer a lifelong lodging where they can live the rest of their lives in safety and love. Such resident animals impose lots of daily expenses on a sanctuary.

Work it out for yourselves. How much money do you spend on your pet? Food, water, health bills, cleaning products. Multiply that with around 300 other dogs or cats and you will have the monthly bill that all sanctuaries face. Have you worked that out for a horse? Expenses are sky high and funds are never enough.

How can we help?

We can always help by adopting, instead of buying, as already stated. Adopting will also ensure that we are not part of another ugly cycle of backyard breeding popping all over our tiny island. But what if we do not have the right space, cannot dedicate enough time, or cannot afford the bills? That is where sponsorship comes in. Friends, colleagues, and families can pool in and sponsor a cat, dog or even, yes, a horse for a year. Sanctuaries have made it this easy for us if we really want to help. By sponsoring we will be helping in the expenses a sanctuary has and ensuring that those animals that are not adopted have a place to call home forever.

Sponsoring also allows us to learn how to be kind, selfless and think of others. Isn't it a nice feeling, knowing that thanks to your small donation you are contributing to the safety of that innocent creature? Isn't it nice to teach our children the importance of altruism and compassion. At their tender age they might be participating in this sponsorship scheme, which might look trivial, but, maybe as adults they could be organising help groups, visiting strangers in old people's homes or spending an hour or two playing with children in care homes.

How can you make this happen?

At De La Salle College, Junior School, the Animal Awareness Animation Team has come up with the Lasallian Animal Friends Sponsorship Scheme. The team assigned a sanctuary for each year group, and a pet for each class. Our students collected a donation of around €2 and in turn they received their pet's profile, together with photos. A poster of each animal was presented to the respective classes so as to help our young students relate to their four-legged buddy. This turned out to be a very successful initiative as even our members of staff contributed to the donations. All in all we

managed to sponsor eight cats from C.L.A.W.S and C.S.A.F, eight dogs from The Island Sanctuary and AAA, and even a horse from RMJ's Horse Rescue.

But we want to take this a step further. We would like to invite other schools to contact us through the email, sarah.mallia@delasalle.edu.mt so we pass on the information and resources so that your students can also participate in this sponsorship scheme. Maybe you would like to help other sanctuaries, and what about coming up with new and better ideas that the schools can share. The possibilities are endless. So if you have an Animal Awareness representative at school do reach out so that we work hand in hand towards one goal.

Compassion is already deep down in the hearts of our children. All we need to do is water it and help it flourish.

News from St Gregory's Bath

Students from St Gregory's, Bath, were given the opportunity to take time away from the virtual classroom and they certainly put the time to good use by taking part in a range of activities that not only sparked their creative talents but also their Christian values.

On Friday 5th Feb we took all our year 7 - 10's off timetable for a wellbeing and house day to give them valuable time away from screens and the opportunity to earn points for their house. After adapting so well to remote learning and live lessons once more, we wanted to give our young people a full day away from technology to connect with the world, themselves, with God and with others in their family or bubble. The day was split into six activities and students could pick five to fill their usual school timetable day. They were ***Be kind, press pause, be creative, be active, be artistic and love learning.***

For the ***Be creative*** baking challenge, our very own master of the lemon drizzle cake, Mrs Tidball, judged the incredible selection of cakes and other treats. She took into account presentation, creativity and how well the finished product linked to the house theme. One of the downers of the day was that we couldn't taste the food, however, it was so lovely to hear how many students decided to take their treat next door to a neighbour or share with others in some way.

Mrs Tidball chose to award bonus points in three categories - 10, 20 & 30pts. A plethora of points were awarded in each, but a particular mention goes to those who were awarded **30 bonus points** for their house:

Stein - Florence B, Lily P, Katie-Grace P, Paola J-V and Luna M

Francis - Ruby S

Romero - Ciera B

Bakhita - Milly C & Isobel N

The overall winners of this challenge were ***Stein*** house who gained an extra 100pts.

In the house challenge ***Be Artistic*** we were amazed at the creativity and expressive ways in which students linked their own personalities with the symbolism associated with their house saints. Bonus points for this category went to over 40 different students who each earned their house an additional 20pts each. However, we did pick a top three which we couldn't choose between - they won an extra 100pts for their houses.

Stein - Paola J-V & James L

Francis - Ana S R

Next term we will start to look at how to put together four separate art installations based on the individuality of the jigsaw designs.

The third challenge of the day which we were awarding house points for was the ***Be Active*** challenge. Our aim was to get as far up the country from Lands' End to John O'Groats as possible with each house having a virtual race. Unfortunately, no house managed to get above Hadrian's Wall! However, they did incredibly well and you can see from the graphic below that Romero and Bakhita were neck-and-neck with only 1km separating their efforts. The most important part of this challenge though, was about getting out and enjoying the outdoors. Therefore, we gave lots of bonus points for students who took pictures, pushed themselves in other ways, took puppies on training walks, another student walked to the shop for a neighbour and my personal favourite - one family went on a metal detector hunt.

Congratulations to these students for their endeavours on the day earning maximum bonus points for their house:

Bakhita - Kendrix P & Alicja S

Romero - Tommy H-S & Alex M

Francis - Tallulah W, Josh H & Ruby S

Stein - James H

The other activities on the day during the day were all about taking some time for themselves or giving to others. These things can't be rated or judged by another person. Practising gratitude is a mindset which raises both your own spirits and those of another. We loved seeing some of the selfless giving which our young people undertook on the day, everything from making family lunch, giving away baked goods to a neighbour, taking someone else's dog for a walk and there were plenty of brews made for hard working adults! That really is a life skill to get in the habit of making a good tea or coffee! We did add some bonus points for going above and beyond, as well as true acts of kindness - E.g. we spotted one lovely student commenting on how amazing other people's creations were.

So many students let us know that the mindfulness tasks, yoga, meditation and letter or prayer writing were genuinely helpful activities for them- ***pressing pause*** & ***being kind*** are

essential parts of life to be balanced with everything else. Self-reflection is a powerful tool for controlling one's own emotions, understanding yourself and others better and for forming a closer bond with God.

Here are a couple of comments that were sent to us by students and staff which attest to the fruitfulness of wellbeing days such as this:

"Thanks for organising a great day."

"Thank you for all the hard work and effort you and the team put into the wellbeing day. Having that day really boosted my mood. We had a really fun day and would love to do it more often."

"Can I just add my voice to the hundreds of parents who I am sure are saying what a wonderful idea today was. The suggestions on the sheet were great. My son really needed that. As the term has worn on, I can see his enthusiasm waning so today was a fantastic tonic. Thanks to everyone for suggesting and creating this wonderful day."

A huge congratulations to Stein House who were the winners of the day with 2010 points. Francis came in second with 1940, Romero third with 1715, and Bakhita fourth with 1695.

Opportunity for Lasallian musicians

Students in the District of Ireland, Great Britain and Malta are being offered the opportunity to join their counterparts in Europe and across the globe in a special online concert.



Organised by ARLEP (Lasallian District of Spain and Portugal) 'SOLO' is designed to lift spirits during this difficult time as Lasallian students from all over the world come together to share their music and send a strong message: together we can.

During this pandemic, it has been clear that music has raised all our spirits. COVID-19 has shown us the fragility of the human being and their ability to adapt to this sad situation. In the middle of all this, music has played a fundamental role. There have been numerous videos that have gone viral in which invisible musicians have shared hundreds of songs with their neighbours. In this pandemic, there have been many initiatives around the world in which music has emerged as the protagonist to offer us a smile into our homes.

And for that reason, we want to join our voices in a special concert: A concert adapted to the special circumstances that we are living through. We must know how to read the signs of the times, and now we are called to be united as a human family. A concert in which we unite our Lasallian hearts in order to do what Saint John Baptist de la Salle told us: *the joy of those who serve God will have no end.*

Therefore, we invite you to extend this initiative to all schools which would like to participate. It can be a motivating activity to share with the world one of the greatest gifts that God has given us: music.

For those interested in taking part, the instructions are as follows:

1- OBJECTIVES:

- a. Living the universality of La Salle in times of the Pandemic using music as an instrumental vehicle.
- b. To fortify the bonds between the different realities of La Salle.
- c. To give prominence to students.
- d. To be a focus of hope in times of pandemic.

2- WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- a. Aimed primarily to students or participants of social and educational works of La Salle.
- b. Students of any educational stage, teachers, administration and services personnel, volunteers, De La Salle Brothers, Guadalupana Sisters... anyone who is linked to La Salle.

Veronique shares popular song through sign language

A teacher at De La Salle College Malta with a passion for education and sign language, has used her skills to help produce a special video to bring a popular song to the local Deaf community.

Veronique Scicluna responded to a request from Sarah Malia, the assistant head at De La Salle College, to create the popular Innu tal-Karnival in Maltese sign language, and along with the help of Jasmine Chircop from St Monica School, Gzira, and the enthusiastic students, it proved to be a very successful venture.



The teachers appeared on the Dak li Jghodd television programme to discuss the video on Wednesday February 16th.

The video proved to be hugely popular and the full details of the project are outlined below.

To watch the video click [here](#).

Who are we?

We, Veronique and Jasmine, are two primary teachers who have also recently graduated as Maltese Sign Language Interpreters. Veronique currently teaches year 1 at De La Salle College while Jasmine teaches grade 2 at St Monica School, Gzira. We are both very passionate about education as well as Maltese sign language.

How did this idea come about?

Actually, this idea stemmed from a similar video that both Veronique and Jasmine had taken part in during Christmas time. It was the Deaf People Association Malta who took the initiative to invite members of the Deaf community, as well as friends and relatives, to sign along to a well-known Christmas song. After having viewed this video, Ms Sarah, the assistant head at De La Salle college, came up with the brilliant idea of rendering the popular Innu tal-Karnival in Maltese sign language. Veronique was very willing to take on this project. Since she was also aware of the fact that Jasmine is a primary teacher in a girls' church school, Veronique approached Jasmine to share this idea. Both schools were very supportive and willing to take on this project which aims at increasing awareness about Maltese sign language. This initiative was carried out as an Etwinning project.

Working on the project...

Veronique and Jasmine started working on the project together, at their respective schools. The Innu tal-Karnival was broken down into segments which were rendered in Maltese Sign Language. Both teachers worked together on preparing the video in Maltese Sign Language. Each girl/boy was assigned a phrase on which they had to work at home, with their parents/families. Veronique and Jasmine prepared videos for each individual child to clearly explain the Maltese Sign Language verse. This was a good opportunity to make the children more aware of Maltese sign language as another language (e.g. Maltese Sign Language is a language in itself and thus, signing a phrase does not mean that every word is to be signed as it is in the original language, in this case Maltese). Parents/families

were very supportive and co-operative throughout – for which the teachers thank them wholeheartedly. The clips were then edited and a final product was rendered by Veronique.

What is Maltese Sign Language?

Maltese Sign Language or LSM is an official language in Malta since March 2016. It is the language of the Maltese Deaf Community. In 2016, following the Maltese Sign Language Recognition Act, the Maltese Sign Language Council was founded. Maltese Sign Language is a beautiful language which is very visual. Although the past year has been a struggle, a positive aspect which emerged through Covid-19 was definitely the fact of having more exposure to this language. Through this, a lot of people became more aware of the use and importance of Maltese sign language to ensure that we are all included and we all have access to information. This language is not only suitable for Deaf individuals, but also for others with communication difficulties. As primary teachers, we both find it is imperative to know sign language and it can easily be incorporated in our everyday lives at school to ensure that learning is accessible to all.

Final comments...

We believe that this initiative was successful and fruitful, despite all the restrictions in place. However, we do hope that when schools are not as restricted, De La Salle College and St Monica School, Gzira would be able to work together on further projects of the sort to encourage others to embrace and make use of this language.

Project promotes respect and inclusive community

An initiative that promotes the core principles of respect for all persons and inclusive community has been embraced by the De La Salle College Junior School in Malta.



The Erasmus + Harmonize Building Bridges project was created to help students become aware of different cultures, beliefs and traditions around the world.

The first activity entitled 'Christmas Around the World' was held at the beginning of December with 100 Year 3 boys (aged seven) taking part using PowerPoint and video, while involving three languages.

The Year 3 boys were encouraged to share any thoughts and ideas about Christmas in Malta which was then followed by a brief discussion about people of different nationalities cultures and celebrating Christmas in a different way. This was supported by a presentation entitled 'Christmas around the World' (see photos attached). The students prepared a Christmas card which depicts Christmas in Malta by including a drawing on the front and writing a sentence stating how they usually spend Christmas time in Malta (see photos attached). At the end the boys also participated in some carol singing in English, Maltese and Spanish. These cards were then posted to a Spanish school to be given out to a few primary students.

Click on links to view video of the [first activity](#) and [Year 3 assembly](#).

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Across Europe, societies are growing ever more multi-cultural which can give rise to cultural conflicts and expressions of xenophobic sentiments. Our students often meet people of different backgrounds for the first time within the school environment.

As educators, we therefore have the moral obligation to provide an inclusive school environment where the value of unity in diversity is practised, showing students from a young age that difference ought to be celebrated, not hated. Being relatively a new phenomenon within schools, we as Catholic educators felt ill-equipped to uphold our crucial responsibility. We need novel ideas and better understanding on how to create a holistically inclusive school environment for all regardless of faith, one that is built on mutual respect, taking into account the different tenets of each minority group. To this end, we formed a consortium between five Catholic Schools from Malta, Spain and Ireland and devised this project to address our needs.

AIMS

We want our students to learn how to respect everybody regardless of faith, cultural difference and appearance. Relationships with other people that they meet should be built on mutual respect and that difference should be celebrated. As for the educators, our main aim is to exchange good practices related to multi-culturalism.

WORK PROCESS

The five Catholic schools will be meeting up online once every month and together decide the themes to be covered related to multi-culturalism such as different Christmas celebrations around the world. Each Catholic school will then be responsible of devising different and suitable age-appropriate activities for their students related to a specific theme/topic. Some activities will include discussions, school visits, workshops, presentations, video clips or sending cards to partners. In this way the students will be engaged and can participate in all activities prepared by the school educators.

EXPECTED RESULTS

At the end, if possible, we would like to do a school visit in Ireland for educators so that they can exchange best practices and ideas in order to increase their personal level, social and intercultural competences and capacity to address the challenges of a heterogeneous learning environment. Apart from developing a strong relationship between these different European schools, the educators directly involved will develop a professional development training for educators on multi-culturalism. On the other hand, the students will become more inclusive of all students of all faiths

and backgrounds whilst also benefiting personally by feeling more accepted, and by understanding the worth of the value of unity in diversity by participating and engaging in different activities.

Students help protect our environment

Students from De La Salle College Malta Junior School have been doing their bit to help protect our environment by taking part in the EkoSkola programme.



This Eco-Schools project aims at mobilising the whole school to empower students to adopt an active role in environmental decision-making and action in their school and in their community. Schools that have successfully achieved this goal are awarded a Green Flag – a prestigious eco-label testifying the school’s commitment to fostering sustainable lifestyles.

The programme was launched in 1994 by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) and now includes over 43,000 schools distributed around the world.

The school’s EkoSkola members undertook the Xrobb I-Ghagin Nature Park Boundary Wall Project.

The initiative began on Wednesday January 27th when the students collected 50, one litre empty cartons, rinsed them and thanks to Ms Claudine, prepared the milk cartons.

These cartons were placed in the small garden and a mixture of soil and compost was used to plant seeds.

This ongoing project will be tended to by the students and teachers over the coming weeks and months.

Br. John’s poetic tribute to our Founder

Br John Deeney, of the Oxford Community, has shared a poem about our Founder.

DE LA SALLE

The Lord in his abundant grace
and in his love for youth,
raised up a saint to spread the faith
and open minds to truth.

The light of learning spreading fast,
John Baptist de La Salle
gave all he had in serving Christ
and following his call.

The path from comfort outwards led
where Providence was guide.
He would fulfil those vows he'd said
with Brothers at his side.

From dingy homes young children came,
escaping streets and strife,
to ordered classrooms where they found
the joy of Christian life.

Seek the will of God, he said,
and in his presence live,
then he will bless your hearts with peace
and what you need will give.

Those teachers who would join with him
were ministers of grace.
They turned their mission and the school
into a sacred space.

As educators' patron now
St de La Salle is known.
He gives to us the chance to take
his teachings as our own.

God's Spirit will be there for all
who will proclaim his Word
and spread both light and charity,
the gifts of Christ Our Lord.

Pandemic can't stop students helping others

The global pandemic may have restricted us in a lot of our activities, but for some Lasallian students even Covid couldn't prevent them from helping others.

Last year, students and staff from De La Salle College Malta Senior School collected books to donate to the hospital for their library. Due to the pandemic, the hospital is not taking any more books. However, the hard work of the students didn't go to waste as these books were instead donated to "Donate Books for Libraries in Tanzania".



Tributes paid to the late Cyril Collins

Lasallians throughout the District and beyond were saddened to learn about the passing of Br Cyril Collins in Castletown on Monday February 15th.

A man of many talents, Br Cyril joined the Juniorate in Castletown in 1941 and over the following 80 years dedicated himself to the Lasallian principles and was highly respected and admired wherever he went.

At the funeral Mass, the eulogy delivered by Br Damien Kellegher summed up the contribution made by Br Cyril in inspiring so many people.

Br Damien's full eulogy and additional information from Br Kevin McEvoy.

Brother Cyril Collins (1927-2021)



“On coming to Castletown today, I feel it is more in the nature of a celebration or an acclamation of the life and death of one of our admired and respected Brothers, Br Cyril Collins. I know I speak for all the Brothers, when I say that he carried that honour with great distinction, even in his retirement. He was a committed religious, a De La Salle Brother par excellence, a man of wisdom, a man of letters, an amateur philosopher, an inspiring teacher, a friend and mentor to many, and a gifted and supremely interesting raconteur.

I wish on behalf of the Brothers to sympathise with his sister, Nora and his Brother Andrew who are unable to be present due to ill health. I also wish to offer our sympathies to his nephews, nieces grand-nephews, grand-nieces and

the wide family circle on his death,

Jeremiah Collins, the future Brother Cyril, was born on 15th Sept 1927, in Doon, Kiskeam, Newmarket, Co. Cork. We know that they had a small family farm, not adequate in itself to provide for the family needs, but in those days, people made do with what they had. There were no benefits or children’s allowances in those days. Rural life in Ireland in the 1930s and 1940s was hard. It was customary for some members in the family to go “into service” as it was called in those days, becoming servants in the big houses in Dublin or nearer home, or working with aunts and uncles. Jeremiah like the rest of the family remained at home carrying out the family manual work on the family farm before and after school each day; no such thing as extra time for study or leisure in those days. It was customary in then in the primary Schools that all teaching was conducted through the medium of Irish, and so he had a wonderful *grá* for Irish with a beautiful West Cork *blas* or accent.

Life was to change for the young Jeremiah, however, when a De La Salle Brother from Castletown, visited the local Primary School in Kiskeam on his bicycle looking for new recruits to join the Brothers and both Jeremiah and his Brother decided to join the Brothers. He was 14 years when he made the journey to the Juniorate in Castletown, Co Laois, in September 1941. In 1943 he progressed to the Senior Novitiate in Castletown for a year’s spirituality following which he received the Brother’s religious habit and was given the name Brother Cyril. After the Novitiate year he went to the scholasticate (house of studies) in Faithlegg House on the River Suir Estuary, (now Faithlegg House Hotel) about eight kilometres outside Waterford city in preparation for his studies as a Primary Teacher. He graduated from the De La Salle Teacher Training College in Waterford, in 1948, and began his career as a teacher in St Patrick’s De La Salle National School, Kilkenny where he spent

three years. There he became involved with James Stephen's Hurling Club and later on in life was invited back to the Club for their celebratory occasions.

After that he spent a number of years teaching in St Felim's Boys' national School, Cavan, where he spent 14 Years, St Stephen's BNS, Waterford, Hospital BNS, Co. Limerick, St. Declan's NS, Waterford, and De La Salle NS, Ballyfermot. He also spent time teaching in St Patrick's BNS, Wicklow, Scoil na Mainistreach De La Salle, Kildare, and in Hazelwood House, on the Upper Kilmacud Road, Dublin before finally retiring to Castletown in 2007. He was an exceptional teacher and I was fortunate to be taught by him in my final years in St Felim's Primary school, Cavan.

Apart from his teaching duties which he took very seriously, Brother Cyril immersed himself in extra-curricular activities especially sport and drama. Paddy Reilly, Honorary President of Cavan Gaels GFC wrote the following:

"On behalf of the Cavan GAA Club I want to sympathise with the extended Collins family and the De La Salle Brothers, on the death of Br Cyril. He spent 14 years in Cavan, but he achieved more in those years than most people would have achieved in a lifetime.

He was a brilliant teacher in all subjects but he excelled in Maths and Irish. He put a lot of hard graft into preparing pupils to participate in Irish drama. He had the satisfaction of seeing his charges winning all Ireland Schools Drama Competitions on a number of occasions.

Brother Cyril is best remembered for his contribution to the promotion of GAA both in the schools and in the wider GAA community in Cavan. He was instrumental in setting up the School's Board in 1955 to organise Gaelic Football at under-14 level. He was secretary of the Board from 1955 to 1960 and his school under-14 team won titles on 6 occasions. Apart from his school work he was also involved with the foundation of the Cavan Gaels Club and trained the team to win the Senior Title in 1965."

Athletics was his other great interest and he spent many years after he retired promoting Community games. He spent a number of years as President of the Community Games and he took a very active part in the organisation of Community Games all over the country. A long-time friend of his, George O'Toole, who often accompanied him to meetings and Community Games competitions, says about him:

"I first met him in 1972 when he was President of the Community Games and we travelled all over the country together attending Meetings and Competitions from Monaghan to Derry to Cork, Kilkenny and Tipperary to name just a few." Some years ago, a special function was held in his honour to mark his remarkable commitment to the Community Games, and a lovely photo is posted in the foyer in Miguel House Nursing Home to mark the occasion.

Brother Joe Reid writes: *"I first came to know Br. Cyril Collins in 1972 when he attended the summer school of athletics at UCD. Br Cyril arrived with Br Athanasius Byrne to organise this event while I arrived from St John's Monastery Ballyfermot as a participant. At that time Br Cyril was heavily involved in Community Games, and devoted a great amount of his time fine-tuning children's abilities in athletics but particularly in running and sprinting events.*

We were blessed to have some of the best coaches in the country instructing us in various athletic events - including the famous Dr Con O'Callaghan in the hammer event."

Outside his work in the schools he was also very faithful to visiting his friends and indeed attending his annual retreat with the Cistercians in Moone Abbey, Co Kildare. He was a holy man, a deeply spiritual person. He spent hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament praying to Our Lady for whom he had a special devotion. He had a gentle sense of humour that could puncture any pretentiousness or expression of superiority. He remained close to his family throughout his life, and they were very faithful in visiting him in Miguel Nursing Home in Castletown.

Eventually when he realised he needed some care he arrived in Miguel House in Castletown on 1st December, 2007. However, he wasn't to spend his time twiddling his thumbs and he soon took up the role of sacristan.

Brother Joe Reid continues, *"I often met with Br Cyril during my many visits to Castletown. He attended the Community Masses celebrated each day in the Oratory. He attended his work as a Sacristan, with nothing short of religious fervour and the more candles that he could place on the altar or in front of Our Lady's Shrine the better."*

Some people are advised to take up a new hobby when they retire and Br Cyril certainly took this advice to heart. A local artist, Billy Dollard, has been organising weekly art classes in Miguel House for many years for the Brothers and shortly after his arrival in Miguel House Brother Cyril took up this new hobby with gusto and made enormous progress. Many of his exhibits are on display in Castletown and in a number of Brothers' Communities and indeed in many of the rooms in Miguel House and in my own room in the Howth Road.

It has to be said that Br Cyril was very faithful to his obligations as a consecrated Religious Brother. Every morning in the school in Cavan we had morning prayers and a decade of the Rosary. During the course the day a student in the class would remind us that we were in the Holy Presence of God. On Sunday morning all the Brothers in the Community attended 10am Mass in the Cathedral in Cavan. The Brothers sat beside their classes and there was seldom any issue with order or discipline. Meanwhile, all the locals attending Mass admired the wonderful behaviour of the Brothers' Boys.

Brother Cyril loved Castletown and enjoyed the organised activities there, the art classes and the trips on the bus on Wednesdays. He was always proud of his work and loved to show his exhibits to those who called to visit. He was very generous with his pictures and loved to present them to family members and friends.

As we bid farewell to his mortal remains, we retain so many good memories of Cyril, a Brother who lived his vocation to the full, helping so many young, and not so young people in different ways. He certainly took to heart St John Baptist de La Salle's wise counsel: *"Is your faith such as to enable you to touch the hearts of your students and inspire them with the Christian spirit? This is the greatest miracle you can perform, and one which God expects of you."* May he rest in Peace with the Lord he loved and served so well during his life on earth. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.*

Br Damien Kellegher

Additional tributes:

Patsy Lee, a past pupil and former Principal of St Patrick's College, Cavan shared the following memories:

"A small group in our class in St Felim's was extra lucky when Brother Cyril decided to produce plays in Irish for competitions at drama festivals. We auditioned by sitting on the classroom floor pretending to row a boat and singing a little verse about our 'báidín'. This was the start of a great adventure which took us on an annual round of festivals in Cavan, Mullingar, Navan, Ballyshannon and even into Northern Ireland. First places were common with individuals like Liam Cooke and Paddy McCormack (RIP) taking individual golds. Brother Cyril deservedly won numerous production awards over the following few years. He had elaborate scenery, lighting, make-up and sound effects on stage like the true professional he was.

*I have vivid memories of training in voice production. He got us to stand at one end of the school corridor whispering until he could hear us at the other end. We won the All Ireland Schools' title twice in Dublin, coming first and second with two plays in one year. This culminated in an invitation to perform our play in Irish at the adult All Ireland English Drama Festival in Athlone. The honour sort of passed over the heads of ten and eleven year olds who were often more interested in the refreshments. The four plays we performed allowed us to see much of Ireland in the Fifties, usually ferried around in Jack Flood's black taxi. The play **Íosagán** launched us into juvenile stardom!*

Brother Cyril was passionate about schools football and a blade of grass was never safe around him as he had a nervous habit of chewing bits of it. He carried the same passion into his support of Cavan Gaels. He was even known to referee matches in Breiffni Park."

(Some photos below of drama groups in Cavan could be inserted with this piece.)

Breda Power who for the past 40+ years has been involved in Community Games at Local, Provincial and National Level and currently the Connacht PRO wrote on the Connacht Community Games Facebook page the following:

"It was with great sadness that we have learned of the death of Bro Cyril Collins, a De La Salle Brother in Castletown, Co Laois. Bro Cyril was a stalwart in Community Games and we all have very fond memories of him Mosney and later in Athlone Institute of Technology. In the early years he co-ordinated the long Puck (Poc Fada) and hurling, and then worked with PR. I have great memories of him always with his note book at the ready going out and about at the National Finals, to record any interesting facts about the participants and teams and their journey to get to the Finals and then sitting down and writing a wonderful story. He was a great storyteller, and many will have wonderful memories of him. He was a true gentleman, and it was an honour to work with him in PR. May He Rest Peacefully in the Arms of the Angels."

Michael Brophy who was on the PR Committee for the Community Games in 2019 wrote:

“I met Brother Cyril in Miguel House in Castletown, Co Laois in April 2019 where we chatted about times past and the Community Games and he relayed some very worthwhile stories from the past. For many years Bro Cyril Collins was a central figure with the PR team in Mosney and later in Athlone and gathered so many stories from the boys and girls who participated in Community Games from every corner of Ireland. His enthusiasm and memory of names was amazing as I sat back and listened to his gentle voice. Before leaving Bro Cyril, I presented him with the ALDI National Community Games programme from August 2018 and his face opened up with that all-familiar smile that we all know about in Community Games.”

Jersey teachers in-Spired by Fr Johnpromise appeal

Self-confessed fitness fanatic, the Rev Father Johnpromise Omeozuru, was supported by De La Salle College Jersey staff as he embarked on an impressive 29km run between seven churches across the Island to raise money for St Thomas’ Church Spire Appeal.



With the closure of gyms under Covid restrictions, Father Johnpromise, who was ordained in 2019 and moved to Jersey to take up an assistant priest role in September 2019, switched to running and soon after decided that he would focus on raising funds for the cause.

Head of PE Paul Livesey was his running partner throughout the challenge, accompanied by two other members of staff. Four other staff members joined at various stages of the run.

The run started in St Bernadette’s Church in St Brelade at 8.30 am, passing through St Aubin, St Lawrence and on to St Thomas’ Church. The route then went to St Clement and finally to St Martin, to the Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation and the Martyrs of Japan.

Despite the chilly, windy January weather conditions, the adrenalin kept Father Johnpromise and his team in good spirits as they successfully reached the end of the route. Father Johnpromise had already impressively raised more than £2,000 before starting the race and hopes to raise plenty more for the spire repairs.

La Salle for Beirut appeal reaches target

The generosity of the Lasallian Family was highlighted once again after the Fondazione De La Salle Solidarietà Internazionale ONLUS shared the wonderful news that the 'La Salle for Beirut' appeal has achieved its goal with the restoration of all education centres.

On August 4th, a massive explosion ripped through central Beirut, killing hundreds of people and injuring thousands more. The blast rocked the Lebanese capital's port area, flattened buildings, and caused significant damage to the Lasallian schools Collège Sacre Coeur-Frères Gemmayzé, Collège Notre Dame and École Saint Vincent de Paul.

The appeal was launched soon after and thanks to hard work and generosity a total of \$1.8m was raised and the work completed. As a result the appeal has now been closed.

For full details see <https://www.lasalle.org/en/la-salle-for-beirut/>

District Lenten Retreat reminder

A reminder to all Lasallians that you are invited to take part in the final day of the District Lenten Retreat on Monday March 8th.

You can join using the following Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84524197905?pwd=ZmY4amdEVnBCbEQ4UUUpjSEM5eEc2QT09>

Meeting ID: 845 2419 7905

Passcode: 931897

The theme for Monday is 'Hope – Looking forward to the future' and will be presented by Br Austin Gili. The retreat commences at 10am with Morning Prayer. Mass will be celebrated at Noon and the day will conclude at 5pm with Evening Prayer.

The opening two days of the retreat explored the themes of '*The Covid Pandemic - a desert experience*' (February 22nd) and '*To heal we must remember*' (March 1st).

St Cassian's Team back at Kintbury

February saw the arrival of the team back to the centre after the Christmas break and a brief period of working from home.



Since then we have been continuing work on our online prayers, both sent to schools and on our social media pages (head to [kintburyexperience](#) on Instagram or Facebook to see these).

Thankfully, despite the current situation, we were able to receive our ashes, ministered by Bex in a lovely service. The team then worked hard to produce an assembly for schools about Lent; how we can make the most of this time, why we have Lent and what's so important about it.

Here at St. Cassian's birthdays are often celebrated days or weeks before or after the true date, mainly due to our working weeks being different to that of a normal Monday-Friday structure. So although Mollie's birthday was way back in September, that didn't stop us from having celebrations five months on.

The latest cold weather snap gave us some lovely scenes around our lakes, Brother Bernard and Brother Terry enjoyed the huge icicles that formed in the surrounding areas, the ducks didn't seem best pleased with the slipping and sliding all over the place.

The team are very excited for the upcoming retreats, returning to Christ the King College after the success of the last retreat, and meeting St. Margret Ward year 10. This term we are also holding a virtual past teams retreat with Brother Chris Patiño (San Fransico New Orleans district) and past team member Mumu.

If you know anyone over the age of 18 who would thrive on our team please do encourage them to email office@cassians.co.uk for an application form.

Memories of Pilgrimage to Lourdes

The celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on February 11th helped bring home to me lots of good memories of about 14 pilgrimages I made to Her international Shrine with an organisation called CLM, or Cuairteoiri Le Muire, founded and run by a Cork priest and a Galway housewife.



There would usually be a nurse and a doctor in each group. We would travel by air, or by coach, boat and train. Everyone paid his or her own fare, helped by funds raised through flag days or other collections.

I was responsible for bringing youths and adults from areas I was teaching in – Castletown, Skibbereen, Wicklow, Waterford. We often joined other CLM groups in Ireland. For most it was the first time abroad, so there was a lot of preparation and responsibility involved. The pilgrimage lasted at least a week.

CLM green and white dress was obligatory for all volunteers who worked in teams of eight with the sick and handicapped, with great emphasis on team spirit and individual care.

We stayed in good quality hotels and eventually CLM bought its own residence, Arus CLM. Volunteers made care of the sick the first priority. Cooking, cleaning and house maintenance was done, under supervision, by volunteers.

Each day was full – Mass, prayer, instruction ... I often said that I was “as much in school in Lourdes” as I was in Ireland. Young people around you all day – discipline and occupation the name of the game. The morning call, in time for meals, ready to move out, pushing of wheelchairs, downtown for ceremonies, have wheelchairs ready, careful of traffic.

Most mornings involved a visit to the Grotto where Our Lady appeared to Bernadette 17 times in 1858. Lourdes is a big busy town, a lot of walking up and down hill. The torchlight procession at night was special, as was the cold bath in ice cold water.

We went to confession, visited the four basilicas, museum, City of the Poor, and the one-roomed jail where Bernadette lived. We took time for a bus trip up the mountain and a trip to the market. Most evenings we had a singsong/dance. Perhaps a late visit to the Grotto for volunteers. Early bed – and supervision.

Was it all worthwhile? Who knows? It used to be that a pilgrimage to Lourdes was a ‘must’ in most parishes. Not anymore. Now, more travel but less pilgrimage.

- Br George Whyte

Br. Tim celebrates special birthday

There were big celebrations in the De La Salle College Waterford Community as Br Tim O'Shea celebrated his 90th birthday on Thursday February 25th.

The Covid restrictions may have curtailed the festivities somewhat but every effort was made to ensure that the big day was celebrated in style.

Deputy Principal, Eileen Doolan, baked a chocolate cake and a coffee cake, and she also co-ordinated a special video from staff for the birthday boy, while over 100 cards were delivered to Tim.



Time to reflect for Benildus Pastoral Centre team

Unfortunately, the pandemic continues to impact our work at Benildus Pastoral Centre with schools remaining closed, re-opening as they are on a phased basis in March. As a team however, we have been keeping in touch with one another and motivating one another. We are very grateful for the De La Salle Lenten Retreat that we are attending three Mondays. It very much gives us valued reflection time and hope for brighter days when our work will be bountiful to meet the need that will be more vital than ever.

Yvonne is involved with the Vocation Team and has been attending the monthly meetings. It is heart-warming to hear of the work that is being done there and the care and consideration that is being given to the Lasallian family across the board in capturing what makes us a Lasallian Partner and sharing that with others through introduction, example and renewal.

I have been in regular touch with the schools who are keen to engage us again as soon as they know their own schedule and we look forward to busy times ahead. We anticipate that April will be busy

right through to June. As previously mentioned, we are ready to hit the ground running with new material, new themes and a new optimism to meet these new times.

God Bless

Eugene Smith, Director

St Benild, Sliema, respond to Covid challenges

Despite the current constraints caused by the pandemic, the teaching teams have still worked hard with their pupils so as to put up a weekly online assembly. These assemblies often present themes related to the Liturgical calendar. Examples of themes tackled this term were The Shipwreck of St. Paul, Carnival and Lent. Assemblies are shared online in class, as well as with parents from home. Moreover, the participation of pupils who are on quarantine or who are being home-schooled is given a lot of importance. Pupils not attending school, for some reason or another, are still made to feel that they belong.

Online assemblies offer the opportunity of **togetherness**.

'Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass, it is about learning to dance in the rain' - Vivian Greene.

This is the attitude which has kept us going.



News from Stella Maris Junior School



Grade 6 students participated in a competition organised by the Social Services Department. The theme of the competition was Careers, and students had to write in Maltese. Five students participated and were awarded a certificate of participation - Jacques Borg; Luca Mascena; Jake Camilleri; Benjamin Friggieri; Daniel Cassar.

International Forum

Stella Maris Junior School participated in the first International Forum on Carnival expressions around the world. Participants from eight different colleges in Brazil, Malta, Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia took part. Each country produced a ten-minute presentation about Carnival culture and traditions followed by a discussion on the importance of exposing the students to the culture of different countries. Watch Forum: <https://youtu.be/DvRHZNm8xYo>. Malta's contribution starts at 1:33.

World Read Aloud Day

On February 3rd, Grade 3 students celebrated World Read Aloud Day. Besides having fun listening to the story being read, the students learnt new vocabulary and how to use speech bubbles and ellipses in a story.

Carnival Celebration Covid Way

This year we could not celebrate Carnival as we usually do. But educators did their best to create a festive day while keeping the Covid-19 mitigation principles in place. The day started with a pre-recorded assembly for all the school organised by Grade 3 Miguel. This is the link for the assembly: <https://fb.watch/3UnxceA29O/>.

Carnival Spirit

Students designed their own African mask. This helped the students get in the Carnival spirit whilst learning to appreciate the art and traditions of different cultures.

Carnival Float

Some students built their own carnival float using recyclable material. All students felt proud that they managed to build their own carnival float, which they took home to enjoy during the carnival holidays. Other students posed in the yard and participated in a carnival photo session, while others danced to the choreography of Jerusalem song.

Visitors to Ardscoil Lasalle Garden Project

1st and 2nd Year students at Ardscoil Lasalle, Raheny, have truly outdone themselves with their woodwork projects and have even received praise from a national broadcaster.

Running with the theme 'Visitors to Our Garden', the students have created beautiful and inventive bird-feeders to display in the garden. As Woodwork class has been put on hold, our students have adapted, swapping their wood and tools for recycled materials to create these wonderful artefacts.

We think they did a fantastic job, and we're not the only ones!

Visit this link to listen to Ryan Tubridy on RTE Radio 1 praise the hard work and dedication of our students, and our very own Woodwork teacher Ms. Plunkett

(Skip to 17.30mins)

<https://www.rte.ie/radio/utills/share/radio1/21904311>

Activities continue at La Salle Retreat Centre

La Salle Retreat Centre, Mellieħa, continued to be active over the past month with a further two retreats held.

The Savio College Community - Salesians - attended for half day retreat on Thursday February 18th.

The retreat involved 12 members of Priests and Brothers and after Lent reflections they celebrated Mass and closed with dinner.

Meanwhile, a weekend Lent Retreat organised by a group of married couples from Attard Parish with their Parish Priest was held. This included five couples and the Parish Priest and took place from Friday February 26th to Sunday 28th.

Learning about religions at Senior School Malta

During the Religion Education lessons at De La Salle Senior School in Malta, the three main religions around the world were discussed: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. As part of their assessment, the students were asked to work of a small project about one of these.

Callum seeks support for charity walk

A student at De La Salle School St Helens is looking for support as he undertakes a walking challenge in aid of charity.



Fourteen-year-old Callum McCarthy is taking part in the Steve Prescott Foundation (SPF) Walk where the aim is to complete 1,000 miles in 365 days. This works out at an average of 2.74 miles per day.

Callum is hoping that others will take on the challenge with him or that they make a donation, and he points out that there are more benefits than just raising money.

“Did you know it takes less than an hour a day's walking to hit 1000 miles in 12 months? That doing so dramatically boosts your immunity and cuts your risk of diabetes, heart attack, obesity, stroke and depression? It can be done before during or after work or perfect for those needing to pass time during furlough or retirement!

“This challenge can also be run alongside a controlled diet, that also can be part of your FUNdraising target. It is also the perfect way to FUNdraise and take in the fresh air rather than joining the gym! You will also have the craic with fellow SPF supporters! Raise £50 and receive SPF 1000 mile T Shirt and SPF Certificate on completion,” he explained.

“Last year, I took part in my first SPF event (LEJOGRUN2020). This was the first non-stop 10K I completed at the age of 14. Participating gave me the bug for fitness and fundraising. During lockdown I also supported Taylor Prescott in his Ultrarun,” continued Callum.

Any donations will be greatly appreciated and can be made through <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/callumspf1000>

News from De La Salle College Waterford

As with all schools across the District, Teachers at De La Salle College Waterford are doing a brilliant job providing for remote learning and teaching.

In addition, teachers are doing their best to keep up their own spirits and those of the students through engaging in various extracurricular activities.

One such initiative was ‘Come Dine with TY’ where students were encouraged to get creative and have a bit of fun.



The Visual Arts Department have also been busy and creative as they produced a special St Valentine's Day video to illustrate the work of the students.

There were celebrations in the school on Thursday February 25th when Br. Tim celebrated his 90th birthday. A special cake was made and he received over 100 cards and well wishes from the staff.

On the school development front, we have erected planning notices for our additional accommodation project to include rooms for ICT, Home Economics and DCG. Well done to the last Board of Management for their work on this.

We will be opening an ASD special class in August and will have further building associated with this. COVID will affect the 'when and what' of this project. Currently there are five boys showing an interest in enrolling.

There are plans to organise a 'Who Wants to be a Thousandaire' fundraising initiative in May, but once again plans will be dependent on Covid.

Latest news from St Joseph's, Beulah Hill

Chapel Assembly

Mr Arthur continues to record virtual Chapel Assemblies during this period of lockdown. Since being in lockdown, the number of viewers has skyrocketed. If you would like to view our latest assembly, please visit our SJC_Chaplain YouTube page.

<https://youtu.be/KxDyqnuW5ak>

House Competition News

1. Submission Mission

Last half term, the Head of House team started the "Submission Mission" where all students had the opportunity to contribute to their House point totals by successfully submitting work across all subjects online.

Data was collated over a 7 week period (04/01 – 21/02) and the results show the amount of effort that our students have dedicated to their school work during this period of remote learning.

For every 5% of submission gained, students would earn 1 House Point that would contribute to their respective House totals.

Over this period of 7 weeks, we had:

- 62,146 out of 139,177 successful submission status updates online across the whole school. This takes into account live lesson attendance, exit tickets, classwork and homework submissions.
- The total House points earned was an astounding 8357 and this will definitely impact our current House standings!

Below we have our Top 3 Submission Mission Students in the school who all had an exceptional submission rate of 97%.

- Pratham (7 Hill) submitted 154 out of 158 tasks earning 19 House points for Mr Goodair's Hill.
- James (7 Brooklands) submitted 153 out of 157 tasks earning 19 House points for Mr Farrah's Brooklands.
- Keano (8 Grange) submitted 151 out of 156 tasks earning 19 House points for my amazing Grange army.

House Points Earned by Year Group

1st – Year 7 with 1726 HP

2nd – Year 8 with 1646 HP

3rd – Year 9 with 1639 HP

4th – Year 11 with 1367 HP

5th – Year 10 with 1363 HP

6th – 6th Form with 616 HP

Congratulations to Mr Goodair and Ms Pemble's Year 7's for setting the SJC standard of academic excellence in remote learning last half term!

2. Every KM Counts

The students have been very busy again this week, and plenty of kilometres have been covered by way of jogging or walking! Staff were very busy over half term, and Mr Farrah has now overtaken his great friend Mr Henry in the race for the staff title, although unless Mr Davies gets lost on one of his walks next week, the title should be his.

It looks like the sun is going to be out next week as well, so if anyone wants to make a late surge for glory, feel free to send your runs through.

As you can see from the images below, students successfully made it through the Ukrainian/Russian border and are now making a beeline for Kazakhstan, staff have just made it into Ukraine, and I fear that may be their final destination.

Student total KM's: 2690KM

Student top 10 so far:

📄

1	Sofyan	7 Brooklands	206
2	Olumide	11 Hill	177
3	Mubariz	10 Hill	153
4	Muhammad	10 Grange	145
5	Abdul	9 Grange	115

6	Igor	8 Beulah	115
7	Simeon	7 Grange	112
8	Aqib	10 Dane	104
9	Giovanni	11 Brooklands	94
10	Oluwakorede	11 Beulah	89

Staff total KM's: 1548KM

Staff Leader board

	Name	KM's
1	Mr Ju Davies	389
2	Mr Farrah	287
3	Mr Henry	275
4	Mr Pavli	136
5	Mr Rimmer	133
6	Mr Atkins	106
7	Miss Pemble	56
8	Mr Austin	46
9	Mr Minhinnick	42
10	Mrs Wilson	32
11	Mr Quinn	21
12	Miss Stephen	17
13	Mr Miller	8

3. Lockdown League

After a long and successful half-term of remote learning, the Heads of Houses set up a House competition for the boys to channel some of their energy into over the half-term break. Titled the 'Lockdown League' challenges were incredibly varied, from writing a film review of exactly 50 words, to completing 50 kick-ups; juggling three objects at once, or writing a letter to an elderly person in a care home. The key aim was to get students moving and away from their screen.

Notable shout-outs must go to the following tutor groups for the amount of challenges completed in just two weeks: 7 Beulah, 7 Hill, 7 Brooklands, 8 Dane, 8 Grange and an incredible effort from Miss Naseem's 11 Netherton, who submitted more than a dozen challenges. Fantastic work, all of you.

Student-specific shout-outs must go to the following students. Jin-Soo (11 Netherton) for his perfect (and hilarious) 50-word Anime review, Jeffrey (11 Netherton) for his incredible bike ride in the shape of Sherlock Holmes, and Seyaam (8 Netherton) for completing eight challenges himself. Great work, gents – making St Joseph's College (and Netherton House) proud.

One cannot fathom the greatness of one piece as it is the apex of culture. The story is driven by an intrepid character called Monkey D. Luffy who gathers his ideal crew into challenging the esteemed title of "pirate king". This character alone induces a thrill of a compelling adventure to viewers, take notice it is but a single aspect of the story.

Jin-Soo (11 Netherton) anime review

4. World Book Day

We are getting ourselves ready for World Book Day on the 4th March and we have competition running remotely – **Read like a Boss**.

The aim is simple. To encourage students to take a picture of themselves reading a book in an unusual position! Staff entries are being encouraged too!

Our Heads of Houses have given us some great examples:

Acts of Charity



We are particularly proud of one of our Year 13 students, Umair, who has been volunteering with Healthy Living Platform to help sort food stock to be delivered to different community centres, food banks and Churches for vulnerable families. Well done Umair, and thank you for what you're doing to support our community during this time of need.

Update from St Declan's NS Waterford

With schools closed since last January, all of our work at St Declan's National School, Waterford, has moved on line. A huge effort was put into this by staff and the parents of the school responded with a fantastic level of support resulting in high engagement levels throughout the period of closure. Half the school returned on Monday March 1st and we are hopeful that our senior classes will return on March 15th.

A number of weeks ago, we ran two competitions on the school website. One was a Snowman art competition for the Junior Classes while the boys in the Senior Classes were given the challenge of writing a COVID Limerick.

The winning picture was from Darragh Sutton Wyse in 1st Class and the winning Limerick by Daniel Doolin in 5th Class. See below.

COVID19

Covid caused serious issues,

'cause we ran out of soap, sprays and tissues.

We could not go to school,

Or jump into a pool,

2020 we will never miss you.

Then along came new year '21,

It turned out to be even less fun.

But the vaccine is here,

We will soon raise a cheer,

And we'll holiday under the sun.



News from Drumcondra Community

I still remember the banner headline on the front page of one of the tabloids in our local newsagent on March 1st, 2020: **"It's Here!"** It was the day after the first case of Covid was officially announced on the island of Ireland. It may have begun in faraway Wuhan sometime towards the end of 2019, but it had now spread to Ireland on the westernmost edge of Europe. There was almost a sense of celebration in the headline - *"It's here, we're not apart from the world, we'll deal with it and everything will be back to normal after a few months."*

Well, one year on, we're still not out of the woods. We're still not too sure which way to go: should we quarantine or not? Will the array of vaccines be effective or not? What are the unseen knock-on effects of the same vaccines? Or are we simply vaccinating ourselves against asking the deeper questions about our current relationships with each other, the environment, the cosmos?

So, here we are, 12 months down the road and we are still in "lockdown". The end-time horizons continue to be pushed back and patience is wearing thin. We are reminded to keep on wearing our masks and keeping our distance from one another and we're beginning to wonder if this is going to be the template of the so-called "new normal". The masks may well become the convenient excuse and escape for not engaging with the other when perhaps that's precisely what we need to do at this time in order to keep our sanity and our humanity. I'm not convinced about this new normal; I continue to hope for a "better normal" based on the lessons learned from an "older normal" that clearly wasn't serving so well after all.

Here in Drumcondra, we continue to hope. It's one day at a time and we're eternally grateful for each new day - something clearly not afforded to everyone. We take our energy from the words of John Henry Newman, *"I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me."* We're very grateful for the miracle of Zoom that enables us as Brothers and partners to assemble in one room to hear other voices and aspirations that resonate with our own. We are not so different after all and our struggle is made that bit more manageable when it is immersed in the struggles of others - and that lesson alone is enough for us to grapple with today.

Kevin McEvoy

Best wishes to all schools on their return

Best wishes to staff and students in Ireland and England as they return to class this month. A huge effort has been put in by all over the past number of months and hopefully this will be the first step on the return to normality. Schools in Malta and Jersey have remained open and the evidence of their contribution to this newsletter illustrates how busy they have been.