Dear Parents,

Once again, there is so much to read in our newsletter. Following feedback from parents and students we have reduced the size and the number of pages, and it is a challenge to fit in all of the many and interesting reports for you to read. Nevertheless, Mr Walls and his team have not been daunted by the challenge, and I hope you will enjoy reading about powerful liturgical events such as the marvellous Year 13 passion play, elections both in school and beyond, and astonishing athletic feats, including the London Marathon and our own slightly shorter pancake races!

Leadership is a common theme throughout the wide variety of events that you will read about: our students are confident and express themselves so well – not only in their written articles in this newsletter, but also orally, such as in the recent Jack Petchey awards. We are very proud of them, and hope you are too.

Yours Faithfully,

Mr A Sharpe
Head Teacher

Spiritual & Moral

THE PASSION PLAY

By Tony Castle, St George’s congregation and former member of St. Bernard’s staff

After the morning Mass on Sunday the 26th March many of St George's parishioners experienced a unique event. The Sixth Form of St Bernard's High School brought their dramatically challenging and deeply spiritual interpretation of the Passion and Death of Christ – prepared for presentation to the whole school community – to the parish.
Parishioners were, at first, a little over-awed by the large number, and clear commitment, of the young people involved in the production. The smooth transmission of actors from one scene to another, spoke of many hours of rehearsals. The very simple costumes indicating the various roles worked well. Music, from start to finish, was appropriate and deftly handled. The haunting ‘Mary, did you know’ (by Lowry and Greene) that was sung by a male soloist, as Mary accompanied her Son’s body to burial, was the perfect conclusion.

The Passion Play at St Bernard’s has a long tradition, being introduced by the Bernadine Sisters some 40 years ago. As a mainly female community, St Bernard’s has always had the role of Jesus played by a young woman. (This is not just from expediency but from a theological/spiritual point of view, it highlights the deep meaning of the Incarnation.) The Sixth Former who played the part this year is to be congratulated on the dignity and sensitivity she brought to the difficult part.

The congregation felt privileged to be witness the presentation. It made for the perfect preparation for Holy Week and Easter. At the end the thunderous applause that went on for quite some time, expressed the gratitude and admiration of St George's parishioners. The Play’s director, and every person who played a part, are to be congratulated on a truly memorable and outstanding production.

SERVICES OF RECONCILIATION
By Erin James, Year 13

The Year 13 House Captains and Liturgy Leaders ran reconciliation services throughout Lent. Each form was invited to come to the Chapel, where they were able to reflect and think about their busy lives in a place of peace. The students were given a pebble to place on the floor in the centre of the Chapel, forming the shape of a cross. This was designed to represent God’s forgiveness as he will not condemn us for our sins; His loving mercy is for all of us. Reconciliation helped the school community prepare for Easter: we cleared our hearts and minds of our sins and negative thoughts and filled ourselves with God’s love.

THE PANCAKE RACES
By Olivia Petty-Mayor, Year 13

It was Tuesday 28th February that saw one of St. Bernard’s most defining events take place: The Pancake Races. As the crowds flooded the playground the teams positioned themselves on the start line and the weeks of designing and constructing unique and comical costumes had come down to this day. Each form entered a team of four in the hope of winning the prize, with each team competing in their year group race. Following the initial races, a final between the winners of year 7, 8 and 9 races was held in order to reveal the Junior Champion. Subsequently, a final between the year 10, 11, 12 and 13 winners was held, thus producing a Senior Champion. The prizes didn’t stop there, with Mr Sharpe judging and awarding the prize for the best costume of the year. The event ended with congratulations to those who had won, and the excitement for next year’s races began. I would like to say a huge thank you to all who helped with the organisation of the event.
Social & Cultural

50TH ANNIVERSARY ~ OUR LADY OF RANSOM CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

By Mr P. Parascandolo, Head Teacher of Our Lady of Ransom

This academic year is the 50th anniversary of Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School, Rayleigh, and the highlight of the celebrations will be a special Mass in a marquee on the school playing field on Friday 14th July at 9.30am. Bishop Alan Williams will be the main celebrant. We would love to welcome past pupils and staff to the Mass. If you would like to attend, please email the school at office@olorcps.net as we wish to ensure that we have adequate seating for everyone.

WORLD ROWING INDOOR 1000M SPRINT

By Mr I. Lomax, PE Department

Taking place on Friday 10th March, Olivia Keenan (4:14.7, 123rd) and Natasha Assrafally (5:51.7, 276th) completed their challenge for this international event, both rowing well. From their technique neither would be identified as absolute beginners, gaining a Personal Best for their first competition. From their technique neither would be identified as absolute beginners, gaining a Personal Best for their first competition. It must be noted that the competitors in their category (Junior 13-18 Years, F) are made up from rowing clubs, universities and schools around the world, including national and international champions, who compete regularly and train for their sport daily. Olivia and Natasha can now add this published World Ranking to their CV’s which could be the start of a rowing career at university or simply further challenges to improve their PB.

The St. Bernard’s Team was ably supported by members of Premises staff who competed in their senior, individual age related categories; Mr Keith Bunker (4:58.5, 47th), Mr Keith Harris (4:27.5, 95th) and Mr Matthew Elmes (3:55.5, 61th), all promoting the benefits of a fit and active lifestyle.
SILVER DoE PRESENTATIONS
By Mrs S. Clancy. D of E Co-ordinator

On 28 March I had the pleasure of attending the Local Authority Silver Awards Evening at the Council Chambers together with Mr Elmes, Mr Clancy and Mr Thompson. Approximately 40 young people from the Borough had been invited to receive their Awards from Councillor James Courtenay, Executive Councillor for Children & Learning. It was good to see 22 students from St Bernard’s attending with their families. A big ‘congratulations’ to everyone who received their Award. As I keep telling you, you are special, not everyone does this and I know how hard you have worked to complete your Award. Well done.

I spend a lot of time chasing DoE participants, trying to get them to load evidence on their EDoE account so that they can complete and receive their Awards in recognition of all the hard work they have put into walking for miles, doing voluntary work, keeping fit and following a skill for 12 months but spending a few minutes updating their account is often left until the last minute. I would be grateful if parents could encourage participants to ensure they regularly update their EDoE accounts.

Students may sometimes forget their passwords or lose their booklets. These things can be resolved if I know about them. If this is the case please ask them to email or see me.

REGISTERING TO VOTE & THE GENERAL ELECTION
By Mr P. Walls, Assistant Head Teacher

As long as you are aged 18 or over on the day of the election you can vote for the candidate of your choice in your local parliamentary constituency. The constituency is a voting area. Generally, you can vote in person (where you go to a polling booth) or you can vote by post. Voting by post is the easier option. However, to vote you must first be registered. To register, go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote and follow the instructions. You will probably need your National Insurance Number. It only takes about 5 minutes to register to vote. You must be registered by 22nd May in order to vote in the General Election on 8th June. If you have already registered to vote, then you don’t need to do so again.
Elections serve an important purpose: they allow those who can vote to elect Members of Parliament (for central government in Westminster) and councillors (in local government, e.g. Southend), who make decisions on running communities across the UK. At present, political parties are campaigning to gain voters’ trust in running the country and representing us in Parliament and on the international stage. In the UK, voting is not compulsory. We have a choice whether to vote or not. To get that choice, make sure you’re registered to vote! This can be done quickly and easily from the age of 17, free of charge.

We may know people who don’t vote for many reasons, the frequently cited reasons being they do not feel a particular party represents them, or the fact that they do not trust politicians’ empty promises. Yet, there are many reasons why people should vote, as the right to do so for many groups in society has been a long-fought battle. Also, the more people who express their views through voting, the more accountable and representative our government, at the Houses of Parliament, is of the British people. In the run up to June’s General Election, it is important to stay tuned in to what is happening and the key issues being raised, even if you can’t vote this time round. There are currently significant issues that are likely to affect young people in the long term more than anyone else in Britain.

Students at St Bernard’s achieved a bumper crop of 1 gold, 5 silver and 7 bronze awards in this year’s UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge. Over 200 000 pupils from across the UK sat the Intermediate Maths Challenge and, nationally, the top 6% were awarded a gold certificate, the next 13% silver, and the next 21% bronze. Jane Jiang was invited to take part in the follow up “Pink kangaroo” competition.

Well done to all of those who took part. Here is a sample question from this year’s Intermediate Maths Challenge:

The combined age of Alice and Bob is 39. The combined age of Bob and Clare is 40. The combined age of Clare and Dan is 38. The combined age of Dan and Eve is 44. The total of all five ages is 105. Which of the five is the youngest?

Alice   B. Bob   C. Clare   D. Dan   E. Eve
March marked the annual election process for the succeeding Head Student Team. After writing our applications and undergoing a tough interview selection process, five candidates were selected to run for the vacancies. We spent three weeks delivering speeches, outlining our manifestos, visiting students in forms, campaigning with teams and giving out promotional materials. After the whole school vote, I am thrilled to say that I was elected as the new Head Student alongside two Deputies; Emma Dodson and Nikita Lee. It is a great privilege to be able to represent the student body and I am excited to begin working with students and staff, encouraging continued excellence in learning and community work.

On behalf of all students, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the outgoing Head Student Team, Olivia Petty-Mayor (Head Student), Finley Wright and Alice Eve (Deputy Head Students). They have been an exceptional team and a credit to the school, both individually and together. Their service to St Bernard’s has been admirable and I wish them good luck in all that they go on to achieve in the future.

BBC NEWS TALK

By Niall Windass, Year 13

On 21 March, Richard Morrell, a BBC Programme Director in televised news, came in to speak to Sixth Form Politics and Media students. In his role Richard is the person directing during news programmes, making decisions on which clip goes next and talks to the news anchor live while they’re presenting the news. For example, he’ll direct the anchor in what camera to look at and what’s coming up next in the programme. So, when you see a BBC news anchor put their fingers to their ear and appear to be listening to something, they could be listening to Richard!

To give us an experience of what it feels like to be a news anchor, Richard had a pre-recorded clip of a simulated news bulletin based on broadcasting live. I volunteered to sit in the anchor’s chair and experience how a live broadcast operates, reading the autocue and facing the camera as directed.

When anchors are talking to reporters they might have some set questions to ask and can go through them with the reporter beforehand. However, this is more often unscripted so you have to be able to think on your feet when interviewing a reporter. It’s a lot more complicated than it looks on TV, you have to talk to the camera while reading the autocue while pointing yourself in different directions depending on the Director’s instructions – and get all of that right as it’s live! Reading the news is much more difficult than at first seems! It was extremely enjoyable and something I would like to do again.

Richard also spoke to us about the history of the BBC with the aid of computer clips to give a visual picture of the workings of the BBC. These gave an insight into where various news outlets were based in the BBC such as the social media team, who taught us how they make a Facebook live video. It was interesting to see that there were only three people based in Broadcasting House for the social media team.
THE LONDON MARATHON

By Mrs L. Joyce, EAL Co-ordinator

On Sunday 23rd April 2017, I took part in the 37th London Marathon (26.2 miles) to raise money for the Brentwood Catholic Children’s society. It was an early 5.30am start but worth it for the atmosphere of the event. After arriving at Greenwich Park and queuing for the toilets (one of many pre-race visits), I was able to marvel at the many other people getting ready to run in this world famous race. Where else would you see a man with a fridge strapped to his back, rubbing shoulders with batman, fairies, dinosaurs, chickens and of course the famous rhinos as well as all the runners who had opted for their regular race gear?

We waited in our starting pens, serenaded by the karaoke runner. Then we were off. It actually takes 30 minutes for all the runners (39,000 of us) to cross the starting line. From beginning to end the crowds were incredibly supportive and encouraging, with cheers and high fives, and bands played to add to the wonderful atmosphere. It is a tough race and I definitely felt it at mile 22.

During the course of the 26.2 miles I felt both pain (literally) and elation. One of the highlights was running across Tower Bridge and, especially, turning into the Mall for the final mile, the longest I have ever known. Once I crossed the finish-line, I was presented with my medal and caught up with my loved ones. I was so happy that I had taken part in what was an amazing experience and one I will never forget.

You can still sponsor me at www.btplc.com/mydonate/Forcharities

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE VOLUNTEERS

By Lois Brandon & Paige McGill, Year 10

Every year thousands of children aged 4-12 years old, take part in a countrywide reading challenge. It is a competition where children are able to win prizes depending on how many books they have read. Volunteers listen to the children talk about the books they have been reading and help children choose new books. They also award children with prizes and participate in activities such as craft sessions. By being a volunteer, you will gain valuable work experience and a reference for employment. It is also good for your volunteering section for your D of E Award. You will meet new people, make new friends and be able to work in a team. In addition, you will learn new skills which will benefit you in the future.

You can sign up to become a volunteer for the Summer Reading Challenge by filling out a series of forms online. These forms will also require a signature from the Head of Year and once the form is completed, give them to the library where you would like to volunteer.

For more information visit: www.summerreadingchallenge.org.uk or www.readingagency.org.uk
PSHE FIRE SAFETY
By Anna Kintu, Year 8

We were very lucky to get Stewart, from the Essex County Fire & Rescue Department, to come talk to us about fire safety in our homes. This helped us all to get a better understanding on how to be safe and learn different things that could prevent fires such as: not leaving your phone to charge overnight or if you have to jiggle your charger in your phone for it to work this is considered faulty and can leave you at risk. Some of the things Stewart taught us about were closing your doors so if there is a fire the smoke will not spread to the room you are in because breathing in the smoke can be fatal, but there are ways of preventing this; for example, installing smoke alarms and checking your smoke alarms batteries regularly. What is even better is that the Fire Department will install these for free if you do not have any or you have any concerns about the ones you have. The lesson opened our minds about fire safety and how to keep ourselves safe.

SHARING OUR MUSICAL TALENTS

THE GREAT BIG DANCE OFF
By Isobel Harforth, Year 12

As a member of St Bernard’s Dance Company, I formed part of the team who travelled to Folkstone to perform in the national competition entitled ‘The Great Big Dance Off’. We were selected to enter the KS4 section with our piece ‘Irregular elation’, which was choreographed by Mrs Alexander and accompanied by the acclaimed classical composition ‘Rhapsody in Blue’ by George Gershwin. In our dance, we aimed to embody the many instruments coming together to make one sound. The venue (Leas Cliff Hall) was buzzing with competitive spirit during the dress rehearsals, and this didn’t decline as we neared the competition itself. The vast age range of our 23 dancers (years 8-12) made this a fantastic experience that enriched the warm community dynamic amongst the company. We placed 5th out of 13 schools in our section, scoring an impressive 233 points out of a possible 300. This was a pleasing result after weeks of working cooperatively to pull the routine together, and it was a pleasure to experience the thrill of performing and simultaneously represent the school in doing so.
SPEAK OUT CHALLENGE

There were 19 Year 10 speakers across 11 different local schools who recently took part in the Regional Final of the Jack Petchey ‘Speak Out Challenge’ at Greensward School. St. Bernard’s had two representatives who spoke eloquently on their chosen topics. Both students performed magnificently and victory was secured for one of our finalists, pictured below.
SECOND HAND UNIFORM
Mrs Krone, School Business Manager

For the last five years Mrs Newsham has organised the collection and holding of second hand uniform and making it available at parent information evenings, year 6 taster day and answering emails requests. The resulting funds have been put to the PSFA fund. Mrs Newsham is now to step down from this voluntary role. We are seeking a new volunteer/s to take on this role providing an invaluable service to many families as well as ensuring that good quality uniform can be reused and not wasted.

Please contact Mrs Krone if you would be interested in taking this on – jlk@stbernards.southend.sch.uk or 01702 343583 ext. 229.

MY COLCHESTER ZOO EXPERIENCE
By Leanne O’Sullivan & Mairead Jordan, Year 7

On 15 March we visited Colchester Zoo for the day and had fun completing mathematical activities, including a lesson where we had to use maths to figure out some everyday sums that the Zoo staff have to do, such as calculating the animal’s medication and food, and calculating the size of their enclosures. For instance, to work out how big the tortoise enclosure should be students needed to measure the actual tortoises. The lesson required us to use our knowledge of measuring, multiplication, area and more. This included measuring a fur, which had been confiscated by Customs & Excise at a UK airport and which had been then donated to the zoo. There was also a cockroach race, with even Mrs Cook taking part.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 15 May – Friday 30 June</td>
<td>Schools Various Times Public Exams Begin &amp; End</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 23 May</td>
<td>During School Day Year 11 Photographs</td>
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<td>Wednesday 24 May</td>
<td>1.35pm-3.40pm Year 11 Leavers Assembly</td>
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<td>Tuesday 30 May – Thursday 1 June</td>
<td>8.00am-4.00pm Library Open for Year 11 Students to Revise</td>
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<td>Friday 2 June</td>
<td>10.00am– 12.00pm Year 11 Food Tech Revision Session</td>
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<td>Tuesday 6 June</td>
<td>All Day Years 8 &amp; 9 HPV Immunisations</td>
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<td>Friday 9 June – Sunday 11 June</td>
<td>Departs 1.00pm Year 9 Bronze DofE Assessment to South Downs</td>
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<td>Monday 12 June</td>
<td>8.30am-5.00pm Borough Athletics Heats at Garons Park</td>
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<td>Wednesday 14 June</td>
<td>All Day Year 12 Visit to UCAS Convention at University of Essex</td>
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<td>Friday 16 June</td>
<td>8.30am-5.00pm Borough Athletics Finals at Basildon Sporting Village</td>
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<td>Friday 16 June</td>
<td>11.30am-2.30pm Year 8 to Southend Seafront to Paint Local Environment</td>
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<td>Monday 19 June</td>
<td>All Day Year 7X Trip to Neasden Temple</td>
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<td>Tuesday 20 June</td>
<td>All Day Year 7Y Trip to Neasden Temple</td>
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<td>Wednesday 21 June</td>
<td>1.00pm-3.40pm Year 8 to Southend Seafront to Paint Local Environment</td>
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<td>Friday 23 June</td>
<td>11.35am-3.40pm Year 11 Celebration Day</td>
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<td>Friday 23 June</td>
<td>8.30am-12.30pm Year 10 GCSE PE Student to Help at St. Helen’s Sports Day</td>
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<td>Monday 26 June</td>
<td>1.30pm-3.40pm 8X Trip to the Synagogue, Finchley Road</td>
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<td>Tuesday 27 June</td>
<td>1.30pm-3.40pm 8Y Trip to the Synagogue, Finchley Road</td>
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<td>Tuesday 27 June</td>
<td>All Day Year 5 Day</td>
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<td>Wednesday 28 June</td>
<td>7.00pm Music for a Summers Evening Concert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 29 June</td>
<td>All Day Year 6 Induction Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 30 June</td>
<td>All Day Year 6 Induction Day</td>
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