

ST MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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8th December 2015

Dear Parents

December 8th marks the start of the Year of Mercy, throughout the Catholic Church across the world. During the Year of Mercy we are all encouraged to examine our place on a pilgrimage to meet Jesus through His mercy and compassion. The church opens wide her doors and invites each us to step forward in a renewed relationship with God. We are asked especially to examine how expert we are at seeing the needs of the world through Jesus' eyes and responding with compassion. This is why we have been developing a school theme of 'the heart that sees' since September. This has been particularly effective in producing a prayerful and practical response to the immediate needs of our world including the plight of refugees and the homeless.

Your children will be able to tell you about the Holy Doors that have been unsealed at St Peter's in Rome. These will be a focus of pilgrimage for many over the course of this special jubilee year. To find out more about their importance there is a PowerPoint available on our spiritual life pages of the school website (www.clitherow.herts.sch.uk). They may also be able to tell you of the official Holy Doors in our Deanery at Our Lady's RC Church in Welwyn Garden City. 'Open Doors' are a really powerful symbol and as such, we aim to produce our own 'Holy Doors' for this special year at St Margaret Clitherow. Over the course of the next month the external doors to the school hall will be transformed through the creation of stained glass panels made by each class relating to a theme of mercy. The doors will be adorned by a sparking evergreen garland where we hope each family will be able to hang their Year of Mercy commitment prayer. Throughout the Year of Mercy this doorway will become our main entrance to assemblies and other liturgical celebrations encouraging each of us to think carefully about our journey of mercy.

The Year of Mercy should be a time of discovery for each of us. We are encouraged to think about themes of compassion, love, support for those in need, forgiveness and, of course, acceptance of forgiveness; we are encouraged to turn our lives and our families around so that we can all truly see through the eyes of Jesus, developing a 'heart that sees', responding both in prayer and in practical terms.

We would love each family to feel involved and as such would ask that everyone completes the attached prayer card (3 are attached – take your pick!) Please colour in the image together, talk about how your family will be different during the Year of Mercy and make a commitment to do something different together. You can record this in the prayer section on the back of your heart that sees.

This prayer could be as simple as "Dear Jesus, during this special year we will look for ways to show your love to the world. Amen"; or it might be very specific about something you will do e.g.



Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him

“Dear Jesus, We will collect blankets and send them to ‘The Hummingbird Project’ for the refugees.” If you prefer, it could simply be “We commit to this special Year of Mercy” and each of you could sign it. It’s up to you! **Please return your completed prayer card by Monday 14th December 2015.**

During the Year of Mercy, we will also be looking for ways to help adults in our community to unpack the effect of ‘mercy’ in our lives. This could be as part of a group that meets regularly to explore issues as we did in 2013 with our ‘Catholic Parenting Group’ or could be a chance for parents to reflect together in a workshop on a theme such as ‘mercy in our families’. If you would be interested in being a part of this group, please do speak to Mr White when you see him or email any ideas to head@clitherow.herts.sch.uk.

The Church’s doors are flung wide open and it is our task to direct as many as possible back through them; this is also our chance to enter through them and have a real impact on the lives of others. Please do consider how you will be able to support this very special and exciting year. I look forward to seeing each of you walk through our new Holy Doors in the very near future!

With every blessing,



Jon White
Headteacher



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