



A Lenten Reflection

On Shrove Tuesday last year, one of my Parishioners came up to me and said: Father, I have a sneaky suspicion that you quite enjoy Lent! Actually, on a personal level I do find Lent something of a challenge and often wish it was Easter already; on another level, I do quite enjoy it! Perhaps this is because a lot happens during Lent which keeps us occupied, spiritually speaking. Each Parish makes a special effort to offer us more opportunities to grow in the love of God. This might be through additional times for Mass during the week, the celebration of liturgies which focus on the spiritual meaning of this season, or the possibility of works of penance and charity which are simply ways of offering God the prayer of the body.

There is nothing negative about Lent. The very act of making a sacrifice is positive. Those who are truly in love will always know how to please the other, even at the cost to oneself, and the fulfilment that comes from such acts. So this is essentially a time of joyfulness when we discover again something of the joy experienced in self-giving. The essence of Lent, therefore, is to be living more intensely what we should be doing throughout the entire year: being people of prayer, doing good, and denying self. Pope St Leo the Great puts it like this in a sermon for Lent: Whilst we may not all be equal in terms of earthly gains, we can all be equal before God in these practices.

One of the ways in which many people within our Diocese live the spirit of Lent is through their support of the Childrens' Society. By supporting this Charity, others are helped by means of our sacrifices of time, money and our talents; this is the meaning of Lenten Alms.

As human beings, there can be a special temptation for us in Lent: the belief that when we undertake prayer, penance and charity, we are better than others! How many of us fail very soon into Lent with resolutions we have made! However, failing in these matters can often be the special grace of Lent: knowing that we are not yet perfect and

that we have to rely on the grace of God for everything. The real grace of Lent will be the realisation that we are fragile and sinful and that we can, and must, begin again and again.

The goal of Lent is to arrive at Easter with the love of God increased within us; if this does not happen, our Lent will have been wasted, whatever we have done or not done. So I do hope you will enjoy Lent, and arrive at Easter with the love of God renewed and deepened!

Fr Kevin Hale
Trustee, bccs.



The Director writes...

Our year has got off to a bright start as we have been able to extend the provision of care into several new schools in the Basildon area. This is good news for the children that we will be able to help and also good news for BCCS as we move a small step nearer to helping every child in need irrespective of background, race or religion.

You will see from the front page of this newsletter that we have also made some significant changes to our image. I hope that you like the new logo which is more current and reflects the fact that we work with children of all ages and their families.

This change is far more than window dressing. We are proud of our catholic heritage and the fact that rooted in the catholic community; we are able to help children of all faiths and none. We are now working across the whole of East London and Essex and it is important that our image makes it clear that the word "Brentwood" in our name refers to the diocese and not the just the town. From the Olympic Stadium

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"We are now working across the whole of East London and Essex"
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to Harwich and from the port of Tilbury to Saffron Walden our work is needed and appreciated by children, families, teachers and head teachers.

It is important that our name and our style of presentation reflect who we are as well as what we do and I am very grateful for the work done on our behalf by Design Portfolio. They have provided us with excellent expert advice on how to change our style at no cost to BCCS.

Everyone knows that hard economic times bring personal problems. Families and

children with problems nearly always find those problems are made worst by financial hardship. Whether it is a lack of new shoes or clothes that leads to ridicule and bullying in the playground or tension between parents who argue more over the difficult choices to be made; children suffer more at times like this. Unfortunately the demand for the work we do is growing and as we strive to help every child in need we are faced with the same economic problems. In wider society charitable giving is always an option and something that can be put aside when times are hard; but if that happens at the time of greatest need it is obvious that children will suffer. For Christians I hope that charitable giving is not something that can easily be put aside but rather something to be greatly valued by both the giver and the recipient. BCCS faces the same economic challenges as every other organisation and times are indeed hard. We often say that the children depend on us and we rely on you, but that is particularly true today.

Many of you will have seen or heard reports about the Children's Society's "The Good Childhood Report 2012. A review of our children's well-being." This report by a well respected organisation is backed by considerable research and confirms many things that, if we pause to consider them, we probably already know. In his foreword to the report Archbishop John Sentamu reminds us that, how a society treats its most vulnerable member (including children) is the moral test of that society. He issues all of us with a stark challenge that; "The fact that... half a million children between the ages of eight and 15 suffer from low subjective well-being should be a wakeup call to us all." The Report reminds us that:

"Children who report low levels of happiness, compared to other children, are much less



likely to enjoy being at home with their family, to feel safe when they are with their friends, to look forward to going to school, to like the way they look, and to feel positive about their future."

It goes on to say that:

"Children who are unhappy in this way are also more likely to be victimised, to behave in ways that are risky to themselves or others, to have eating disorders, and to be depressed."

These are exactly the sort of problems that the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society deals with every day. Our work supported by you helps children to handle and even overcome these issues but as you can imagine this is not easily done. It is time intensive and requires professional skills possessed by our team of Social Workers and Counsellors. It is clear from the Report that our work is more needed than ever before but there is another factor that makes this even more the case.

Cut backs in government expenditure in almost every aspect of state provided services, impacts upon the ability of the State and Local Authorities to fund the care and support of the most vulnerable in our society. Our experience when dealing with cases that overlap with the Statutory Services is that they are increasingly hard pressed to provide comprehensive care. Those working in the state sector are simply not able to do as much as is needed.

Therefore if the moral test of our society is to be passed we must do what we can to ensure that our society treats the most vulnerable with the best love, care and support that we can.

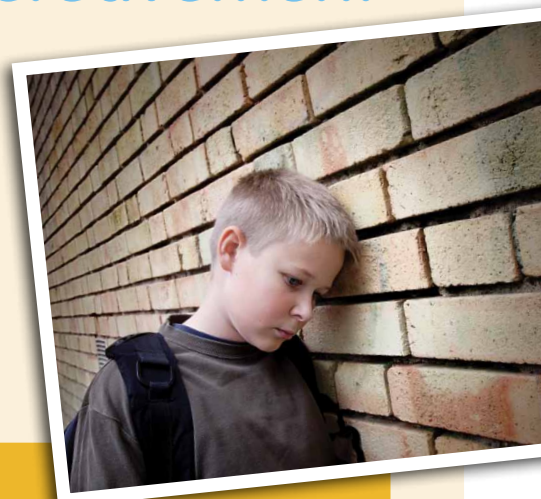
Helping Children Through Bereavement

How schools can help

Research indicates that up to 70% of schools are dealing with a bereaved child at any given time. Many staff members may feel anxious about how to support a child or young person when they have experienced a bereavement. Showing that you care about what has happened and how they are affected as well as listening to their needs are some of the most helpful things that a school can do.

Understanding of death, especially in young children, develops over a more prolonged period of time. It is clear that young children can suffer deeply as a result of the death of a member of their family. Their suffering is more intense if they do not have the opportunity to grieve openly, and do not feel that their feelings are recognised. Reactions to bereavement can include withdrawal, open distress, tears, panic, aggression, anxiety, fear or other signs of stress. Sometimes stress may take the form of unusual behaviours such as giggling, being very brave, acting out or total denial.

When the child returns to school the normality, routines and security of the school environment can help the child make gradual adjustments to life without the person they loved. There are many things that the school can do to help both immediately and in the long term.



Immediately

- Contact with the family is very important
- Give out accurate information, following the family wishes
- Consult the young person/child regarding return to school strategies
- Let the class know about the pupil's return, being mindful of the pupil's wishes
- Help class prepare for return, cards or letters and school assemblies
- Discuss funeral with staff and pupils and who may attend

When the child or young person returns to school, there are ways in which the child or young person can be supported.

- Providing a safe space and person if time out is needed
- Consider possibility of peer or mentor support from another year
- Be alert to verbal and non-verbal communication and changes in behaviour
- Support the staff supporting the child/young person
- Consider ways to commemorate the dead person if the pupil wishes and note significant dates.

School may also be an escape for the bereaved child – a place where there are no distressed parents and reminders. It may be 6 months or a year before the child or young person reacts. This is normal and not an excuse for attention seeking behaviour.

In support of schools, children and families, Brentwood Catholic Children's Society (bccs) is delivering a two day workshop, free of charge, for children aged 7 to 11 that have had someone special die. It will be run during the school holidays and offers bereaved children the opportunity to think, talk, explore and share their feelings about the death of their loved one. **For further information please contact (bccs) on 01268 784544.**

St Peter & Paul's Catholic Church Ilford host their first "Live Crib"



With tremendous support from parishioners and a little help from a few of Fr Andrew Headon's friends the forecourt of St Peter & Paul Ilford was transformed and the Christmas story was re-enacted with parishioners and animals. Live cribs ("Presepe Vivente" in Italian) are a tradition going back to

1223 when St Francis of Assisi re-enacted the Christmas story with villagers and animals in Greccio, central Italy.

Fr Andrew hoped that the atmosphere would be as dramatic and equally prayerful, putting "Life back into Christmas", and it certainly did.

Get involved!

20th ANNIVERSARY SPONSORED WALK

Saturday 28th April 2012 is the date set for our annual sponsored walk. 2012 is the 20th anniversary of the walk and we are hoping for a record number of walkers this year. With your help we can make the walk another resounding success. Try to encourage family members, friends and other parishioners to take part. Your personal support is vital to the work of the Society. There will be walks going to Brentwood Cathedral on the day, where all walkers will be greeted with refreshing drinks and a ploughman's lunch. There will also be many circular walks taking place around the Diocese on a variety of other dates.

Charity Golf Day

Lords Golf & Country Club, Rayleigh

Monday 25th June 2012

This will be held at Lords Golf & Country Club, Rayleigh on Monday 25th June 2012. The cost is £45 per person (£180 for a four ball) and will include:
Bacon Rolls/Tea and coffee in morning, 18 holes of Golf & Lunch.



A Gift in your Will

Whatever your circumstances, it is important that you make a Will. Without one the law dictates who inherits your estate, which may mean that you do not provide for your loved ones as you would wish. This is particularly true if you are unmarried or live with your partner. With our expert help, we can produce a Will to suit your immediate and future requirements. By making a tax efficient Will, you will be surprised how much you can save to pass on to your beneficiaries.

Only with a Will can you choose:

- Who is to administer your estate
- Who is to benefit from your estate
- How much financial provision is made for your beneficiaries
- Who is to care for your young children
- What age your young beneficiaries are to inherit
- To make provision for a vulnerable child or dependent by setting up a trust in your will
- Who gets sentimental possessions and family heirlooms which may otherwise be inadvertently sold, disposed of or become the centre of family wrangles
- To show your generosity to your chosen charity.

We offer a home and hospital visiting service to clients who need it.

People often assume making a Will is a timely and costly process. We are committed to providing you with a value for money service and are more than happy to discuss our fees in advance. You will be surprised at how inexpensive it is to make a Will and if you come to us as a result of reading this article we will give you a 10% discount on our normal fees.

Danny Carter

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 7th July

Moonlight Colourthon

A night time ½ marathon sponsored walk along Southend Seafront.

Saturday 8th September

Cascade for Children

Collectors wanted for street collection in Southend High Street.

Wednesday 5th September

Run for a Child

A 5k sponsored run a Langdon Hills Country Park

Friday 14th September

Golf Classic

Charity Golf Day at Illford Golf Club

DERBY WITH A DIFFERENCE

– a day at the races but in Essex!

Coming soon a new event to coincide with 'Derby Day' we will be hosting a day of fun, laughter and excitement as we bring Derby Day to Essex. Full details are yet to be confirmed but please register your interest with Julie.

SKYDIVING

**SATURDAY 30th
June, Headcorn,
Kent**

Are you in the mood for something a little bit adventurous? Imagine the adrenaline rush as you leave the plane at 12,000ft, heading towards the earth at 120mph for 7,000ft of free fall, then the tranquillity as the parachute deploys and you gently descend back to terra firma.

We are looking for people to make a sponsored 10,000ft freefall parachute jump, so why not take on the challenge of a lifetime whilst at the same time raising vital funds for bccs.



For further information on these events or help and support on hosting your own fund-raising event, please contact Julie Abbott on 01268 784 544 or jabbott@childcareuk.org.

Childcare: Brentwood Catholic Children's Society, Childcare House, Little Wheatley Chase, Rayleigh, Essex SS6 9EH.
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