

Parent Teacher Association



Sacred Heart
RC Primary
School,
Battersea



Connecting home and school.
Together Stronger. Together Better.

NEWS

January 2019

Dear Families and Staff,

It's official! We have made it through the 1st term of the school year, Christmas and into the new year. We hope everyone had lovely Christmas and is ready for the **new adventures of 2019!** We are looking forward to achieving our **goal**, which remains the same year on year: organising fantastic events that enrich children's experience at school, community building activities and, most importantly, supporting our school. We want to **provide resources** that positively impact our children and staff and **inspire** them to achieve great results. In addition, we hope to leave a legacy of **thoughtfully spending** the money that we all **work together** to fundraise.

The best way to make this year **the best** yet, is to **volunteer** in some way. We are asking **each family** to support the PTA **in action**, may it be coming to the **Coffee morning social** or coming to a **meeting** to help us make the **right decisions** for our children, offering your **time** or donations for an **event**. Or perhaps you are the doer, who prefers **doing a little** stint at a stall or you'd like to get your **whole family** painting and cleaning the school. By getting involved, children **do better academically**, their **self-esteem grows**, and school

January

Mon 7th First Day back
TBC Coffee Morning Social
Wed 16th & 23rd Year 6 SATs meeting
Thurs 31st @10am, Don Bosco Federation Mass
KS2

February

TBC Spring Clean & Paint
18th – 22nd Half Term, Mon 25th Inset Day

Every Friday 8.40am SH PRAYER

To all children
and adults born
in January



improves. You'll enjoy **meeting other parents** and teachers, building **great rapport**, as well as sharing ideas, concerns and experiences. Try it, and we promise **never to pressure you** into any job you don't want to do. You can **participate as much or as little** as you like, and as you are able, **finding perfect balance** that is right for you. **Let us** make this the best year yet, **together!**

Sonia Sedda and Ivana Tanaskovic PTA Co-Chairs, 2018-19

In this month's issue, we are delighted to introduce a very special person, Fr. Gerry, who together with Deacon Michael helps the children understand and explore the meaning and message of our Catholic faith. Thanks to their commitment and the nurturing relationship with the school, both children and staff benefit from excellent Catholic education, pastoral care and support. Please remember that if you would like to catch up with any of the missed interviews, you can simply visit the PTA website on pta@sacredheartschoolbattersea.co.uk.

IN THE SHOES OF...

FR. GERRY

Q: Can you say a little bit about yourself?

A: Hi, my name is Gerry O'Shaughnessy and I am a priest of the Salesian Order who have been working in Battersea when the first group of Salesians came to care for Sacred Heart parish and school in 1887. Most of my priesthood has been spent in school as a teacher, leader, chaplain and governor. My first experience of full-time parish was at St James in Bootle. I then spent some time in Chicago at the University, which I loved and while I was in that academic atmosphere, I was able to write a book called "Pastoral Popes" published in 2016. That same year Fr Hugh sdb and I were asked to come to Battersea and take charge of Sacred Heart parish and Our Lady of Mount Carmel parish in Battersea Park. I am so blessed to return to my school roots at Sacred Heart School, St Mary's School, St John Bosco College and SFX Sixth Form College-all of which come under our care. I am part of a dynamic team who want to make a difference and bring Jesus to the heart of Battersea. I am delighted that I took up the invitation to come to Battersea, I am very happy here and look forward to remaining here for as long as I am useful!!

Q: What was your favourite childhood book/story and a film/programme?

A: Growing up in Ireland, we did not have a TV until I was 10 years old, and only came on in the evenings. I loved to read, play out and work on the farm that my family ran. My favourite book was by C.S.Lewis "The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe". I remember that I did like a TV series called "Tales from Sherwood Forest" all about Robin Hood and his merry men.

Q: What were your hobbies as you were growing up?

A: I played rugby from a young age and still support my local team Connaught and, of course, the wonderful Irish Rugby squad (did you know they beat New Zealand?). I joined a drama club when I was about 6 as my mum thought it would improve my confidence! I still love going to the theatre and am so blessed to be here in London with the West End on my doorstep-two members of my family are professional actors and work on stage, TV and the movie industry.

Q: Did you have a favourite game/board game as a child?

A: As a family we lived with my Grandma who loved to play card- whist and bridge were her favourites; however she taught us all types of card games, which were great fun. At Christmas we enjoyed games like Monopoly and Cluedo. Last Christmas I even played a game of electronic Monopoly which was totally different!

Q: Did you have a pet?

A: I grew up on farm so was lucky enough to have fields of pets! By large our cats and dogs were working animals on the farm and were not allowed in the house, but we did have a cat who lived in the house called "Fluffy" and lived to about 12 years. We also had a border collie called "Prince" and he was allowed in the house too!

Q: Do you have a favourite childhood memory?

A: My best childhood memories have to be the summer holidays when we would go to stay on my other grandma's farm: all her grandchildren descended on her farm and we got to sleep in the barn (boys upstairs and girls downstairs). It was a wonderful six weeks of games, stories, fishing, trips to the beach and "helping" with the farm chores. Every night my great uncle Pat would tell us a good night story, usually an Irish legend. I think it was him who gave me my love for history as he would take us on field trips to abandoned castles and ruins of old monasteries. Once a week we would all go to the cinema -set up in a tent on the village green-it was very basic, but we thought it was fantastic and it was the nearest thing we got to Hollywood in the West of Ireland.

Q: Have you always wanted to become a teacher? What do you love about teaching?

A: I have wonderful memories of schooldays; my first teacher was Mrs Wright and she is still alive at over 90! She was very caring and taught us all about the stories from the Bible. In secondary school I think I was an average student, but I had

two favourite subjects: History and Literature. Mr Partington helped me gain my A Level History, while Mr Unsworth taught me English Literature; they both made their subject come alive with regular trips out of the classroom. Mr Unsworth took us to Stratford every year where we would see at least two Shakespeare plays: I still remember the strength and power of Janet Suzman playing Cleopatra. The hobby of drama became a real passion in my late teens and I seriously considered going to university to study Theatrical Arts, but my dad would said to me: "acting might never pay the bills no matter how much you love drama; why not become a teacher? It is a steady job and you get good holidays!!" In the end I decided to go to Liverpool to study a Bachelor of Education in History and become a secondary school teacher-later I obtained a Master of Arts in Media Education. I loved the classroom and learning every year from a new group of children-I always gained far more than I was able to share. I also taught Drama and ran the drama club in all my school placements; I've directed everything from nativity plays, "Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat", "My Fair Lady", "A Christmas Carol" to traditional pantomimes like "Cinderella" (where I also played the part of an ugly sister!). Teaching was a great springboard for me to work also as a priest, as I was able to run youth clubs, summer schemes and holidays abroad. I was very blessed to be a teacher and that has prepared me well to become a parish priest. I believe that the school should be the centre of parish life and I am so lucky to work with people like Mr Brading, Deacon Michael and all our staff, governors, children and families who share my vision of quality Catholic Education.

Q: What was your first job?

A: My first every paid job was working in an Italian restaurant when I was about 14 as a washer upper! Some people have asked me "why did you become a priest?" Priests do not drop down from 'Planet Priest', they are part of real-life families and each has a different vocation story. Only last term, I had really thoughtful questions from Year 6 about Priesthood and Vocation as part of their RE programme. I am firstly a Salesian, a follower of St John Bosco who wanted to ensure that young people were cared for and educated well. When I was about 11 and in my first year at secondary school, I was lucky enough to go on a two-week residential camp run by Salesian Brothers (like Bro, Ste, Bro Greg or Bro Joe). My best friend, Sean was going, and my parents were delighted as it only cost £5 for two weeks! We all shared with the Salesians kindness and fun; this was mixed with a fantastic experience of prayer and the Mass which stayed with me. My family were very supportive as were most of my friends-some thought I was mad! Simply put, I suppose I wanted to become a Salesian Priest so that I could help young people discover the great joy of sharing the vision of Jesus Christ. I firmly believe that God is calling young (and not so young!) from Sacred Heart School and Parish to follow him in this way. I urge you all to consider it and I urge parents to support their children if they ever mention it.

Thank you for your time Fr. Gerry.