



St. Peter's
Catholic Primary School

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Dear St. Peter's Families,

I hope that yesterday, you all enjoyed lots of delicious pancakes and spent some quality time together. For me as a child, Pancake Day was always a great opportunity to turn off the telly and have some fun with my sisters; I even managed to turn the telly off and enjoy flipping some pancakes as a grown up this year! Having said this, putting my mobile phone down was more of a challenge.

Today, we celebrate Ash Wednesday, the start of the season of Lent. This is a special time where we reflect; like Jesus in the desert, we are encouraged to pray, give alms and say sorry for the things we have done wrong. I was immensely proud of our children as we all attended the Mass this morning and received our ashes. They really are such a gift from God.

Many of us are giving things up for Lent and some of us are trying to go the extra mile on a journey of self-improvement. Today, my colleague at Trinity, Chris Gabbett asked all parents to consider taking their child's Smartphone off them for the Lenten period, or at the very least, restrict their access to the internet and Social Media with the hope that incidents of cyber-bullying are reduced. Whilst such a request is less relevant here because our children are younger, it did make me think about my own over-reliance on my phone, the TV and Social Media. Furthermore, I considered the things that I miss because I'm too busy living in a virtual world. I'll quite happily waste half an hour on Facebook in an evening, but never have any time to go for a run!

I would like to ask that we take this time to do something small but meaningful as a family this Lent. I would like to ask you as parents (and perhaps children!) to do the impossible, to put your phones away or at the very least, just use them as a phone from school pick-up until 9pm. No Facebook, no Facetime, no Twitter, no Snapchat! Instead, interact, play, socialise and notice all of the things that as a society, we are at risk of missing because we are staring at our phones. There are so many reasons why this is so important. I would love our children to see that Social Media is a choice and not something that defines them and makes them relevant in a community as they grow up. Our children are so special and I want them to be confident in their own God-created brilliance. Over reliance on our online personas can leave all of us vulnerable to bullying, isolation and withdrawal from reality.

Some of you will start with good intentions, some will not start at all; I won't be taking a register, this is entirely up to you, but if you are struggling to think of something to do this Lent, join in and we'll see what we can achieve as a community. If you want to share what you have done with your time instead of being online, please feel free to tweet (after 9pm of course!) [@stpetersleam](https://twitter.com/stpetersleam) and give our other families some ideas. For those of you living with a particularly competitive/Social Media addicted partner or teenager, perhaps you could set a £1 penalty for 'mis-use' and fill our Fr. Hudson's boxes up over the Lenten period. I'll leave it up to you to decide what works best for you, but hope that you will consider this and see it as a real opportunity. Whatever you choose, let's support each other as a family and aim to have a happy and Holy Lent, putting our families at its heart.

Best wishes,

Miss T. McNamara
Headteacher