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Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Catlow Hall Street, Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
BB53EZ

Parish Priest: Rev Fr. S D O'Brien
Tel: 01254-232433



Wednesday 13th January 2021

Dear governors, staff, pupils and parishioners,

**‘Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.’
(Mt. 11:28-30)**

These are the words of Jesus proclaimed each year at the Mass of the Sacred Heart. They are words not just recorded with ink and paper but the living words of Jesus Christ that reach out to us from the Gospel. Words that burst out from the page filled with God's tenderness and mercy to console our hurting and broken hearts.

‘Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.’

Jesus invites us to come to him with our overburdened hearts full of sadness at this time for Mrs Sarah Welch, our parish Headteacher at Sacred Heart School, whose unexpected death has shocked us all. Feelings of bewilderment, sorrow, disbelief and numbness have all been experienced, I'm sure, in one way or another since the tragic news broke. We are all beginning the journey of grief and mourning that can be dark and lonely, however, I think Mrs Welch still has a lesson to help us on this journey.

Sarah's faith in Jesus was unashamedly public and shaped her vision for Sacred Heart and the school community. The greatest lesson she taught was trying to live the life of a disciple whose words, thoughts and actions echoed the beating heart of Christ. Through her kindness, positivity, warmth, hope and genuine welcome to all who crossed the door of school she truly lived the image of the Sacred Heart. Let us follow Mrs Welch's example and actively live as disciples heeding Jesus' invitation to come to him and lay our sadness and sorrow before him. As he promised in the Gospel to give rest to those hearts that came to him in faith so we take comfort that he gives Sarah rest on her new journey with him.

*O Sacred Heart of Jesus, Have mercy on us all.
O Sacred Heart of Jesus, Give rest to Sarah.*

Please continue to pray for Mrs Welch as I'm sure she is continuing to pray for us. If anybody would like to talk or say a prayer together then do not hesitate to contact me at St. Mary's presbytery.

God Bless and keep safe
Fr. O'Brien