



CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Executive Head Teacher: Gerida Montague MA
School Senior Lead: Eleanor Prince BA PGCE

26th April 2023

Dear Parents

I am writing to propose an exciting project that I believe could greatly benefit our pupils and school community. As you may know, one of the core values of our school is to foster cultural understanding and empathy, as part of our mission to equip pupils to become 'Architects of a Better World'.

OLSJ School Governor Roger Maughan has been working with Eneless Patmos School in Zambia for quite some time and has built strong links with the teachers there. The school is in the capital of Zambia, Lusaka, and has 157 pupils on roll, from 1 year to 17 years of age. Many of the pupils are orphans and from the streets of Lusaka.

School Leaders have also been in contact with teachers at the school to learn more about the schooling system in Zambia, about how pupils are taught and about the conditions and facilities in Lusaka schools.

Sadly, pupils in Lusaka are not afforded the opportunities that our children are given in the United Kingdom, and we have been shocked by the lack of resources and materials that pupils have. Despite this, they are healthy, happy, and enjoy their education. However, in line with our principles of Catholic Social Teaching, we would like to support those in great need, and so in the final half term of this academic year, we will be raising money for supplies for Eneless Patmos School across all of our partnership schools.

However, rather than just giving a stand-alone donation, we would like to invite Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils at OLSJ to take part in a 'pen pal' project with pupils of a similar age at Eneless Patmos School. Through this initiative, our students will have the opportunity to learn about a different culture and way of life.

Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils will send letters to their Zambian counterparts, sharing information about school life, their hobbies and interests. Staff at Eneless Patmos School will support children in Lusaka to reply to the letters that they receive from our pupils.

This project has the potential to be incredibly rewarding for our students. Not only will they gain valuable knowledge and insight into a different culture, but they will also develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

We have been sent photographs of the school buildings and information from teachers in Lusaka, that highlight the stark contrasts between education in the United Kingdom and that in third world countries. These will be shared in a 'launch assembly' with pupils, before asking children to write a letter to a pupil at Eneless Patmos School.

Pupils of course, and parents, have the opportunity to opt out of this experience. If you wish to do so, please do so in writing by Friday 19th May 2023. However, we sincerely hope that you will consider this proposal and see the value that it can bring to pupils at OLSJ and to pupils in Zambia. Please note that we intend to send a class photograph with the letters. If you do not consent to this, please let us know in writing.

If you have any questions concerning this initiative, please do let us know.

Many thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Montague'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'G'.

Gerida Montague
Executive Headteacher