

# *Reflection Journal for Principals*

*June 2020*



*“Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road “ (Lk:24:32)*

## **‘To Lead as Jesus Led’**

It is probably safe to say, that as you began the academic year back in September, you never envisaged having to lead your schools through a worldwide pandemic. How your school operates, communicates, teaches, engages with students and parents, supports and nourishes each member of your school community, has been challenged, turned upside down actually! And there is no manual, no leadership course, no schools’ app, with a section titled-‘Being a School Principal in the time of Coronavirus!’

And yet you have managed to do just that-you have and continue to be, a school principal in the time of Coronavirus. You may feel, like most people managing in ‘lockdown’, that you got some things right, that you made mistakes, or that you were just totally overwhelmed at times.

Hopefully, you have also been surprised by your own strength and resilience, the strength and resilience of your staff, pupils and families, and have still been able to experience the peace and joy that the women at the tomb experienced on Easter Sunday, in knowing Jesus has risen and he is their consolation and their joy.

Pope Francis said recently, *in relation to this time of Coronavirus,*

*Christians also are called to be joyful witnesses to Christ's victory over death amid the coronavirus pandemic... The good news of Christ's resurrection is what brings hope and joy to all and shows that "our actions – our anointing, our giving, our vigilance and accompanying in all possible ways in this time – are not and will not be in vain."*

As the end of the academic year approaches, using the Gospel story of The Road to Emmaus, we invite you to take time, be still and reflect on the path you are walking, on the journey, which has led you to be where God needs you to be at this time and to pray for the wisdom to continue to ‘lead as Jesus led’, believing as Saint Therese of Lisieux did that, *‘that the smallest Happenings of our lives are guided by God.’*

### **Psalm 121**

*I lift up my eyes to the mountains; where is my help to come from?  
My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.  
May he save your foot from stumbling; may he, your guardian, not fall asleep.  
You see -- he neither sleeps nor slumbers, the guardian of Israel.  
The Lord is your guardian, your shade, Lord, at your right hand.  
By day, the sun will not strike you, nor the moon by night.  
The Lord guards you from all harm, the Lord guards your life,  
The Lord guards your comings and goings, henceforth and for ever.*

## Relaxation Exercise

### **Find a quiet time, light a candle, have an image of Jesus near you, if possible**

Allow this time of quiet reflection to help you to appreciate that, as Pope St John Paul II told us, any journey that we have been on, Jesus has travelled before, and now travels again, but this time, with us.

Sit back with your back against the chair, your eyes loosely closed, your feet and arms uncrossed.

Now move your head slowly, forward and back, forward and back. Relax and let go, relax and let go.

Now move your head to the left and to the right. Just relax and let go. Allow each movement to be slow. And with your right shoulder, move it forward and back, forward and back, forward and back, relax and let go.

Now with your left shoulder move it forward and back forward and back, forward and back, relax and let go.

Imagine down through your right arm, to your right hand, make a fist and let go, opening every one of your fingers, as if the tensions of the body are going through your fingertips, as you relax and let go, make a fist and let go.

Imagine down through your left arm, to your left hand, make a fist and let go, opening everyone of your fingers, as if the tensions of the body are going through your fingertips, as you relax and let go, make a fist and let go.

Be aware of your back against the chair and the weight of your body as you sit on it. Move down through your right leg, into your ankle, feeling the toes inside your right shoe.

Move down through your left leg, into your ankle, feeling the toes inside your left shoe. Relax and let go.

Now be aware of your breathing, bring the breath in through your nose, hold it for a few seconds and let go...and again...and again...

Now as you breathe in this time attach any distractions...uninvited thoughts to the breathe and breathe out, allowing the distractions to go quietly from you, and again...

As you breathe in and out, in and out, think of this as the breath of God, pure...clean...life-giving... Now take a deep breath and bring in God's healing....God's trust....God's love. Let God's love flow into every part of you that needs him

And breathe slowly out

And relax

Feel the presence of God radiate within you

And pray

Lord Jesus Christ...

Be with me as I reflect ...

Send me your Spirit of peace...

Guide me in my prayer

Be with me as I draw closer to you this day.

## **Read the Story of the Journey to Emmaus**

**Luke 24:13-35**

### **They recognised him at the breaking of bread**

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.







