

Friday 3 February 2023

Deconstructing the world to help us understand

Dear everyone

Following from last week's letter, a parent drew my attention to the advances being made in the world, lest we focus too heavily on the darkness in our world. Quite right, too.

This week is Candlemas, commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple. As the school gathered in the quire on Tuesday, the Sacrist, Rev Robert Coupland asked us to consider what light is. It isn't just the absence of dark, it helps us to see. Robert talked about candles and light in a way that inspires optimism and hope, whatever our faith. It put me in mind of the work of Joseph Wright of Derby, whose use of single points of candle light, in a technique of chiaroscuro, brings close attention to the subject matter, to those things that matter.



Stem cell research, water on Mars, AI (which makes a regular appearance in the Friday letter), vaccines, renewables and so on, all are advances worthy of optimism. Optimism is a way of thinking, of understanding the potential and excitement in the world, and we see that every day in our children. In conversation with our Head of Science this week, Richard Dilks, he makes the point that to be well-informed then gives us the power to innovate, make decisions and direct the future.

If your child mentions something about painting and something to go and see, and can't quite remember the details, it would be Cezanne at Tate Modern. This morning I made the link between Cezanne as a proto cubist, the work Year 6 are doing around Picasso, deconstructing forms, its influence on modern architecture, the machine age, what Ligeti was up to with Metronomes that we tried out two weeks ago, and why there are more deliberate connections between the Cathedral and the School, if you look hard enough. Anyway, hot foot it to the Tate in the holidays. These shows don't come around very often.

There are plenty of reasons to be cheerful. Here's some more. And not for the first time on Friday, here's Ian Dury...click on the picture of my yellow socks.



Best wishes

Simon