



# ST COLUMBA'S FAMILIES NEWSLETTER

## HELLO FAMILIES OF ST COLUMBA'S

It feels like a week when young voices, or the example of young people, have been showing us the way. At a time when many of us – children and grown-ups – may be feeling a bit tired, bored, or overwhelmed, along came examples to inspire. First, 22-year-old, Amanda Gorman recited her uplifting poem at the Inauguration of President Biden in Washington DC.

Then, there is Francesca Jones is a 20-year-old, British tennis player. She recently qualified for the Australian Open in Melbourne – the first Grand Slam tournament that she has ever reached. At the time of qualification, she was ranked No 241 in the world. Qualifying for any of the Grand Slam tournaments is a huge achievement. However, Francesca's pathway is even more remarkable. She was born with a thumb and three fingers on each hand, and with only seven toes, because she has a rare genetic condition (ectrodactyly ectodermal dysplasia.) A large part of her early years was spent in hospital. When she was eight, surgeons told her to forget any ambition to become a professional tennis player. Proving doubters wrong became a motivation for her there and then. As one journalist wrote: "What she has achieved is a testament to her astounding determination. Even if she loses her first-round match in Melbourne next month, Francesca will fly home with her entry into the topflight secured."

I am glad and grateful that we get to see and hear such different, but inspiring examples, like Amanda and Francesca. But not surprised. It is young people in churches, schools, clubs and families that so often bring real life and joy to their surroundings – and so, bring life to others. That is certainly true for us at St Columba's.

Finally, thanks to one other young voice – Betsy Llewellyn – who pointed out that Sunday 17th January was World Religion Day. She thought it might be of interest for others.

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/event/world-religion-day-2021>

Thanks again to Fiona for choosing some activities for the weekend. Stay safe, stay sunny and have a lovely weekend.