



# COLÁISTE IOGNÁID

## EASTER NEWSLETTER 2021



### MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Easter Greetings,

Fr John Dardis, formally a teacher in Coláiste Iognáid and now working for the Jesuit Curia in Rome is a world-renowned expert on Discernment, a practice we are trying to incorporate into our routines in the school. At the beginning of the pandemic last year, Fr. Dardis released a short video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPGlcZwBr2Q> which called for us to reflect on what kind of world we want to create post-COVID. As we look forward with optimism, it is timely for us to reflect. What can we as a community take from this time and use going forward? Are there practices we engaged in previously which were unnecessary? What type of College do we want to create for our students?



It was positive to see Brendan Gleeson recently highlight the dedication of teachers and draw attention to the difficulties faced by our young people.

Teachers have experienced a period of profound professional transformation in the past year. With extremely limited training, and initially poor-quality equipment and broadband, the teachers in Coláiste Iognáid have provided consistency to the students during both periods of school closure. Providing full timetables and quality engagement every day online is a huge challenge. It has been offered in the best spirit of our Jesuit tradition. I also appreciate that much juggling went on in many homes to enable teachers to deliver regular online classes. On a personal level and on behalf of the Board of Management, I would like to thank all our teachers and SNAs for all their efforts.

Mr Gleeson also highlighted the role that young people have played in this crisis. A colleague said to me recently, we will be middle-aged for a relatively long time (hopefully), but you are only a teenager for a very short time. Many of the normal formative activities that teenagers routinely engage in have been put on hold. School, sport, music and other hobbies have all been interrupted and yet we still ask more of them – ‘wear a mask, social distance, sit behind that screen, don’t play ball games, don’t congregate in large groups’ etc. I would like to pay tribute to the young people of the Jes and acknowledge that the sacrifices they are making are appreciated by us all here in Coláiste Iognáid.

Thank you to all the parents and guardians who have paid their Voluntary Contributions. This money enables us to plan events and purchase equipment without being constantly worried about the bank balance. To give **some examples**; We recently were able to supply laptops to help families in need and purchase IT equipment for staff working from home. Psychologist Shane Martin was employed to deliver a motivational talk to our 6<sup>th</sup> year students, spot prizes were purchased for the Mid-Term assemblies and for Seachtain na Gaeilge. We have also recently purchased 4 heavy duty outdoor 8-seater picnic tables. All of this and more is possible because of the support of our parent body. On behalf of the Board of Management, I would like to express our sincere gratitude. If you would like to contribute, please follow the link on the Compass App or contact Margaret on [bursar@colaisteiognaid.ie](mailto:bursar@colaisteiognaid.ie).

Even though only 200 students have return to in-person learning, as you can see from this newsletter it has been a very busy time for the school. We look forward to welcoming all our students back to school on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter.

Cásca sona

Beir Bua agus Beannacht

**LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS**

The Lenten season offers us the image of Jesus wandering the desert being tempted by the devil. It's a time when we reflect on Jesus' loneliness, isolation, penance and suffering. During the Lenten season we are encouraged to walk this journey with Jesus. Prior to Covid 19, at times it was difficult to think that we could truly relate to Jesus' experience in the desert and also find a renewed relationship with him in our daily lives. Our annual penance of abstaining from favourite foods and supporting the Trocaire appeal seemed to be as much as most could endure or commit to during the Lenten period. A question one has to ask is did it really prepare our hearts and minds for the Easter season?

This Covid19 pandemic has affected us all in different ways. However, most would concur that it has been a time where we have been forced to reflect on our meaning of life and our understanding God. It has in some ways forced us in to the desert of uncertainty and in some ways despair. Is this something like Jesus experienced in the wilderness?

From our daily updates from the HSE we continually await good news which seems all too slow and



*Reflection - Tess Grealish and Caoimhe Cleary*

frustrating. The message for hope and salvation we eagerly wait for. However, one need look no further than the Easter message of Jesus' resurrection. This gives us an everlasting hope and salvation which no pandemic, no unemployment, no sickness, no loneliness, no isolation can affect. Jesus' loves for humanity knows no bounds, Jesus loves for you knows no bounds. Is this something to rejoice in?



The first-year class in the Art department are so excited to have been chosen as one of three Galway schools to take part in Tulca's new art education programme.

This programme. *Create Dangerously* gives learners and teachers the opportunity to explore creative thinking and creative making using a blend of art and philosophy.

Selected artists have been commissioned by Tulca to create work specially for this new and exciting initiative. The artist Donal Mc Connon's work piece 'A March in March' will be the starting point to ignite the inspirational spark in this unique adventure. Our individual and collective responses will emerge in the shape of artwork and activities through structured dialogue.

Through the process we hope to create our own 'creativity manifesto' Finally, an exhibition will be

shared not only with our school community but will also be posted online.

As this is a pilot programme some editions of these will become part of the Create Dangerously programme, which will open to schools across the country after this pilot has run.

The class is so thrilled to be embarking on this new creative as yet unwritten journey. They can't wait to start questioning, experimenting and exploring new avenues in creative expression.

Many thanks to Curo for their vision and expertise in designing this unique educational programme. The lovely Annie Mc Keown o Donovan [a past pupil] will be working with and mentoring us throughout this exciting and innovative venture.

Many thanks also have to go to Tulca who are the sponsors and the rock that support all of these art education programmes.

Pam Dolan, Art Teacher.

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## Tráth na gceist Fíorúil / Virtual Quiz as Gaeilge

D'éagraigh Roinn na Gaeilge Quiz ar líne le linn imeachtaí Sheachtain na Gaeilge ghlac na ranganna ar fad sa chéad bhliain agus sa dara bliain páirt sa Quiz éineacht le na múinteoirí ranga .Bhain na daltaí agus na muinteoirí an-taitneamh as an ócáid seo agus iad ag cur tús le ceiliúradh Lá fhéile Pádraig. Chuir sé go mór le folláine na ndaltaí agus iad ag fáil sos deas ón gcian fhoghlaim.



### Comhghairdeas leis na daltaí ar fad a bhuaigh duais .

**First year prize winners:** Eoghan Cafferty, Malena Morles Glynn, Eoghan Madden, Mai Given (1X), Niamh Drea, Caoimhe Carolan, Oisín Ó Conaire, George Gallagher, Asia Ward, Mark Egan, Paddy Cunningham Smyth, Ella Grace Lee (1G), Jack Mannion (1L), Kyle Cosgrove, Tara Flynn (1C).

### Buíochas mór to the class teachers Ms Dolan, Ms Gilligan, Mr Bloomer and Ms Burke.

**Second year prize winners:** Kieran Downs, Sadhb Mannering, Calum Elwood, Ruairí Walsh (2L), Tomás Walsh, Ailbhe Ferguson, Daniel Harrison, Reuben Florisson (2G), Ben Wall Cooke, Caoimhe Brennan, Rory Bundschu, Anna Reidy (2X), Steven Parkinson, Katie O Riordan, Aoife Hanney, Aoife Bundschu (2C)

Students can collect their prizes in school after Easter. Maith sibh!

### Buíochas mór to the class teachers Ms Finnerty, Mr S. Parkinson, Mr Silke and Mr Sherry.

Tharraing ceist amháin alán cainte. Cé a bhí mar chaptaen ar fhoireann na Gaillimhe nuair a bhuaigh siad Craobh na hÉireann sa pheil I 1998? An bhfuil an freagra agatsa?

Ag Guí Cáisc Shíochanta Shábhailte oraibh ar fad.

E Nic Dhonncha

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## TRANSITION YEAR

The Bar of Ireland's "Look into Law" Transition Year Programme is an exciting initiative aimed at increasing students' awareness of the work of The Bar of Ireland and to encourage students to consider a career as a barrister. This annual "Access all areas" programme aims to encourage schools and students from a wide cross-section of society to apply to take part. Due to Covid-19, this programme moved online for 2021. Although the programme was different from the usual TY Programme, Coláiste Iognáid had 15 students who completed the programme this week.

This dovetailed very well with the TY Law programme students completed on Thursday March 25th at NUIG.

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## ONLINE LEARNING



### THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

*Gregory McMahon spoke to some Junior Classes about their experience of online learning. Here is the summary of his findings:*

I've been talking to some people and found that there have been very mixed opinions on online learning, for example some people find it ok, whereas other say that they highly dislike it. I've gathered some pros and cons on online classes that people have said to me:

#### Pros

1. Students struggling with confidence no longer need to spend hours making themselves look good, so now they can focus more of that time on studying and doing assignments.
2. Students find that they can get better feedback on their work as they're submitting it directly to the teachers.
3. Students with a long journey into school no longer have to waste an hour of their day in a car or bus

#### Cons

1. A few students are reporting having microphone problems which are slowing down the classes.
2. Students are reporting connection issues, hindering their ability to hear or pay attention to the class.
3. There is no real way to check if a student is paying attention in class, so this could be a major struggle for the teachers.
4. Students have been reported kicking other students from calls, though this is an easy fix, teachers just have to make sure that no students are presenters unless presenting.

Overall, I'd say online classes aren't optimal but in the situation we're in it's our only option without shutting down the school for months.

### THE TEACHER EXPERIENCE by Dr Daniela Donghi

If I were to describe the last nine weeks in three words, I would probably say 'busy', 'challenging' and 'rewarding'. Why would I choose these words?

When the last lockdown was announced, I did not feel that bad. It was not the first time; we were more prepared. We knew how to use Teams, and, in a way, we could all consider ourselves 'digitally literate'. However, after the first few days, all of the challenges of online teaching, the ones we faced last year, but that were magically wiped away by two successful terms back to school, they all came back, like a hurricane. Suddenly, we were back to teaching through a screen, without seeing our students.

Despite the difficulties, students engaged generally well. But because of technical issues on the one side, and inevitable boredom, due to the long days spent in front of a computer on the other side, all of those interesting exchanges of questions which make lessons more than a mere transmission of information, suddenly disappeared, and one lesson risked being almost exactly the same as another!

To avoid this from happening, teachers started exchanging ideas and strategies on how to make lessons more engaging. A simple word cloud, an interactive quiz, a video, or even virtual group-work through the breakout rooms could introduce a little bit of variety in online classes. Teaching material had to be adapted to online learning, balanced workload and

quick and effective assessment methods had to be designed. Definitely 'busy' and 'challenging' times, exploring new approaches to engage young students, to keep them motivated and interested, and prevent them from surrendering to boredom.

It was particularly hard for practical subjects. The practical aspects of science were almost lost; there are excellent simulations on-line, and virtual lab experiences are amazing at times, but we did miss lab work and experiments.

In addition, the absence of direct interaction made it difficult to answer questions like 'Did they understand? Can I move to the next topic?'. One of the ways to answer these questions was to get students to upload their homework. However, I appreciate how difficult this could have been for them. The workload may have been heavy at times, and they could easily forget to

upload some of the work. On the other hand, asking students to upload homework meant constant corrections to be done, and personalised feedback to be sent back to them. And this was challenging, as it required excellent organisational skills so as not to end up 'snowed under' with assignments to correct.

However, I did say 'rewarding' too. It was rewarding when students answered (and asked) questions and when they submitted good work on time. It was rewarding when they engaged with class activities. And it was rewarding when they did so well in their tests.

Because of all this, I would describe my online teaching experience as 'busy', 'challenging' and 'rewarding'. It was an instructive experience, but I am now looking forward to being back to 'old-style screen-free' school with all students.

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## STUDENT COUNCIL

Since we've been back to school the student council has been organising and creating, fun and inclusive ways for students to enjoy their time in school despite Covid and the many lockdowns we've experienced. Some of these events included:

**Pride day:** Each year was designated a colour to wear from the pride rainbow to show our support of the LGBTQ+ community, and to encourage people from this community to feel comfortable expressing their individuality.

**Dress up day:** Just before Halloween break, the students were encouraged to dress up in costumes. They were also asked to donate money which would later be given to the school's charity of choice. Over €300 was raised for St. Vincent de Paul, and the dress-up day really raised morale in difficult and stressful times for students

**Best decorated classroom:** Just before the Christmas break, each class group was asked to decorate their individual rooms to help students get into the Christmas spirit. There was a prize for the winner of each year.

**Introduction video for first years:** Due to Covid restrictions, the future first years of our school were unable to attend the open day. Therefore, the student council and Vinnie O'Sullivan stepped in to help. We created a fun and friendly video explaining all about the choice subjects of the school, the ethos, the extra-curricular activities and so much more for the parents, teachers and future students to enjoy

**Comhairle na nÓg:** Some of our junior members of student council attended a Comhairle na nÓg in February, where they were briefed on Galway's progress on the sustainable development goals.

**Plans to attend ISSU AGM:** The Student Council have nominated delegates to send to the Irish Second-Level Students' Union Extraordinary Assemble at the end of March. Here, they will have a voice in matters such as the new ISSU Constitution.

**Administrating the questionnaire about walking/cycling to school:** Members of the Student Council conducted a survey on students walking and cycling to school, with the hope of gaining an insight into what would open up these options to all students. The survey was completed by all years, and we learned valuable information that will help sustainable transport and development in our school and in our city.

**Meeting with senator Pauline O'Reilly:** Members of the Student Council met with Green Party Senator Pauline O'Reilly to discuss the results of the survey. The meeting was very productive, and the survey was very helpful in identifying areas to which part of the sustainable transport budget can be allocated. This will allow for safer, more accessible travel for those walking and cycling to school.

Meave McHugh, Blathnaid Molly and Peggy Forde

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## DESIGN 'A HOME FOR EVERYONE'



Today, Ireland faces many challenges: a housing shortage, climate change, Covid and building inclusive communities.

The Construction Industry Federation invited students to participate in designing 'A Home for Everyone'. The winning team were to present their home design to the Construction Industry Federation (CIF), the Minister for Housing and others and win prizes for their school and themselves.

Coláiste Iognáid had two students competing in the National competition - Cian Carr and Tom Maye. Both completed two high standard projects which looked at addressing the housing crisis in Ireland and how, with innovation and technology, this could be addressed. We, as a school, received tremendous help and support for this project from CIF affiliated company Rhatigan Construction.

Well done to both boys! The future of engineering and construction is in safe hands.



*5<sup>th</sup> year student Tom Maye with drawings from his project*

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## COUCH TO 5K

With remote learning necessitated it was decided that the second, third and fourth years would take part in a 'Couch to 5k' program as part of their Physical Education class. It involved six weeks of training and a virtual race at the end. The training was multi levelled with beginner, intermediate and advanced training programs provided so as to cater for all. With no sports clubs, gyms, swimming pools or team training allowed it seemed a perfect fit for the few weeks and proved to be such. Engagement was high across the years and a few teachers got involved to make it a real whole school endeavour. The virtual race, where the athlete tracked and submitted their run time using a phone app, took place over the first two weekends in March. The results revealed some great effort and virtual competition but moreover everyone who took part benefited from the process. It is well documented that physical exercise is important for good physical and mental health and it is hoped that this program may start a routine of running/exercise that will continue into the future so that these benefits can be experienced through the schooling

years and beyond. Below is a table of the different winners from the various year groups but, in reality, everyone who completed the 5k was a winner.



## RESULTS OF COUCH TO 5K

Mr. Leonard has been organising a 'Couch to 5K' with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Years, 3<sup>rd</sup> Years and Transition Years over the past seven weeks, finishing with a virtual race taking place over the past two weekends.

The races were incredibly competitive and the results are as follows:

SECOND YEAR	
Boys Winner:	Dermot Ford
Girls Winners (Dead Heat):	Georgia Costello and Tara Clancy

\*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Girls Race was the most competitive, with Siun McGovern finishing only 4 seconds behind the two winners.

THIRD YEAR	
Boys Winner:	Finnin McCormack
Girls Winner:	Holly Faherty

\*Finnin McCormack averaged an amazing 3:18/km for a time of 16 minutes and 30 seconds.

TRANSITION YEAR	
Boys Winner:	Conor McLaughlin
Girls Winner:	Aoibhe Briscoe

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR NOTES

### COLÁISTE IOGNÁID GAELIC FOOTBALL CLUB

Sadly, there were very few footballs kicked this year at Coláiste Iognáid. It is especially unfortunate for our 6<sup>th</sup> years who didn't get the chance to represent the school in their final year. After five years of training and continuous improvement we always look forward to the senior team's performances as a guide to and representation of the work that had been carried out over the previous five years. It is hoped that players will continue to play Gaelic games and to use this participation as an avenue to good physical and mental health as well as a means of social connectedness wherever they find themselves. We wish them well and thank them for the good memories and hard work. Other groups also missed out this year and the girls were robbed of a chance to play (and win!) at Croke park at the start of the pandemic...hopefully their day will come again. We all look forward to the resumption of Gaelic games and all going well there will be many enthusiastic students looking to get involved early next year and the O'Neills will fly again!



*Junior final 2017 The current Leaving Certs were in second year. Pictured with their coaches Mr. Maughan and Mr. Sherry at Tuam Stadium*

## ROWING NEWS

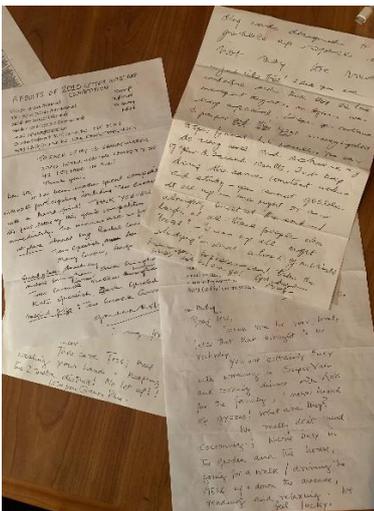
The Rowers in the Club have continued training throughout the lockdown period regularly training five times a week. The training is a mixture of home circuits/yoga on zoom with coaches, runs and cycles close to home. All sessions are noted and coaches and rowers have been very innovative in devising mixed team competitions with four athletes. There have been some superb team performances.

In addition, Zoom sessions are being held for our rowers and coaches with International coaches to improve technical knowledge on rowing technique.

We hope that when sport resumes to welcome all back to rowing and in addition to our existing first years we would welcome any new first years who would like to give rowing a try-out this summer.



*Nature - Andrew Redfern*



*Lockdown Letters - Tess Grealish*



*These Times - Rhian O Callaghan*

The photos included in this newsletter were created by 5<sup>th</sup> Year students in response to Weekly Challenges set in English class through the last lockdown.

Many thanks to all the students who participated! Ms. Anthony