

24th Sunday of Ordinary time

Year B

Catholic Education Sunday



Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds has sent this message on behalf of the Bishops of England and Wales:

“Over the last eighteen months we have seen an upheaval affecting everyone in our society, the like of which has not been witnessed since the end of the Second World War. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed not only aspects of how we live our lives but has given us a chance to reflect on the fragility and preciousness of human life, on human solidarity, and the capacity to show love and support to our neighbours.

Like many other front-line workers, teachers, school leaders, and support staff have exemplified this love throughout the pandemic, going above and beyond to support the young people in their care. It is only right therefore that on Education Sunday, we take this opportunity to offer prayers of thanksgiving for all who work in our Catholic schools and colleges, and to express our gratitude for their outstanding dedication and professionalism, especially during the pandemic.

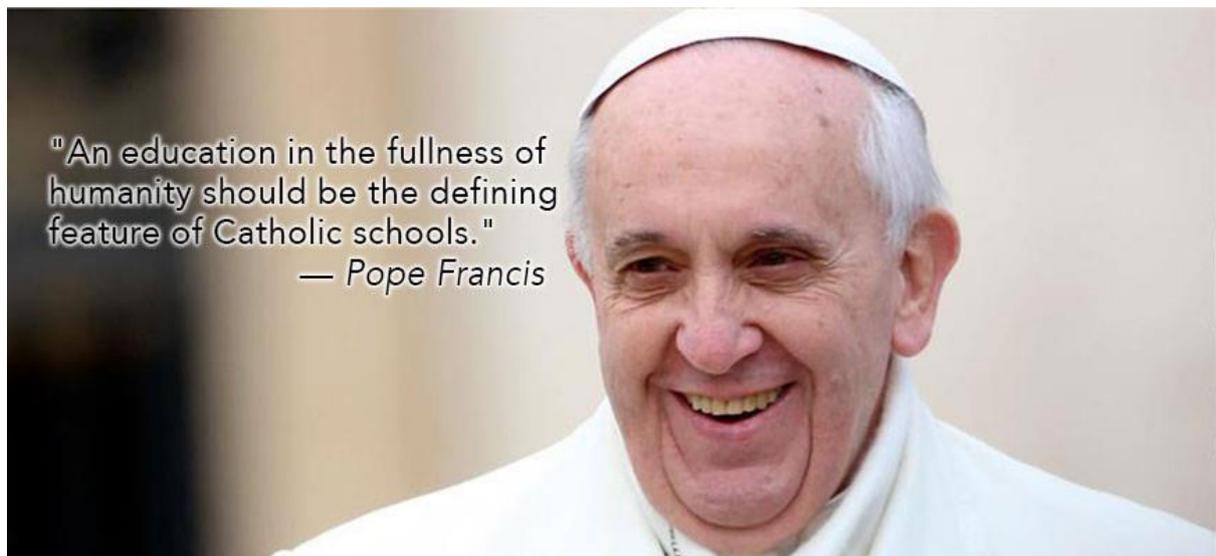
Throughout the challenges they have faced in two national lockdowns, two sets of exam cohorts, and a managed return to schooling, the staff of all our schools have exemplified what it means to follow the command of Our Lord Jesus Christ to love our neighbour. On behalf of the Catholic Education Service, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to them and my appreciation for the vocation and mission they exercise in the community of the Church.”

We are so lucky to have strong, pastoral Catholic Schools in our community. The three schools whose logos appear above are part of a Faith Partnership of Schools which comprises all the Catholic primary schools in the London Borough of Southwark alongside two secondary schools – St Michael’s and Notre Dame. These school all witness to Gospel values

and are committed to working, with others, to ensure the best possible outcomes for the children and young people in their care. As Catholic schools, they value the home, school, parish links which have been a hallmark of Catholic Education for many years. They ensure that children and young people know and understand the messages given by Pope Francis and Archbishop John in documents such as “Laudato Si” and “No Place for Racism”. In doing this, they reflect what we are told in the readings this Sunday.

In the second reading St James says: “I will prove to you that I have faith by showing you my good deeds.” and in the Gospel we hear, once more, Peter’s profession of faith: “You are the Christ.”

Earlier this year, Pope Francis said that Catholic schools should be “welcoming places; places which *teach to discern, to read the signs of the times, to read one's life as a gift to be grateful for and to share*”; communities “*promoting faith and justice*”; environments for “*meeting with the little ones, with the poor and the discarded; settings which “have a conscience and create consciences”*”.



Please prayer for our Catholic schools that they

may be inclusive, not competitive;
model themselves on Jesus who showed us the way to love;
heal the broken;
be a welcoming and safe place for the poor, the disadvantaged and the marginalised;
be communities of love and learning;
be communities of faith where God’s word is shared

so that our children and young people may, by their actions, proclaim their faith and trust in God who is love.