

Education Sunday 2016

Sunday 11th September

‘All are welcome’



Foreword

Education Sunday is a day of celebration for all those involved in education, teachers, students and staff. This celebration coming fittingly at the start of the academic year, the Catholic Church welcomes this opportunity to come together to celebrate and reflect on the coming year in our schools and colleges.

The Catholic Education Service's theme for Education Sunday 2016 is 'All are welcome'.

In light of this theme, it is fitting to use Education Sunday as an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for all those who work so hard in Catholic schools to ensure every student is welcomed and encouraged to develop their talents, in and out of the classroom.

Churches play a vital role in education in this country, running one third of all schools. The Catholic Church is the largest provider of secondary schools, and the second largest provider (after the Church of England) of primary schools. Every day, over 800,000 students attend a Catholic school. We also have a thriving University and College sector.

This year's theme, 'All are welcome', truly expresses the spirit of education in Catholic schools. They are some of the most inclusive schools in the country, and truly reflect the vibrant diversity of the communities they serve. Not only do Catholic schools perform better than most in academic terms, but remaining true to our mission to the poor, they also serve significantly higher proportions of children from the poorest neighbourhoods. It is only through the tireless work and open hearts of the whole school staff that students in Catholic schools can enjoy learning in some of the most diverse and inclusive schools in the country.

The Church is rightly proud of its nationwide network of schools, making an authentic and holistic vision of Catholic education a reality, welcoming all, often in the most difficult circumstances. This has a huge impact on the well-being of our country and is a vital service to the Common Good of our nation, a nation characterised by its inclusivity and diversity.

It is therefore important to pay tribute to the many teachers, leaders, support staff and governors, without whose dedicated commitment Catholic schools would not be the nurturing and thriving places so many children benefit from.

We hope that these resources will help you plan your Education Sunday as a celebration of the commitment and achievements of Catholic Education. Education Sunday provides an opportunity for schools to share their work, strengthening the partnership with parishes, which is vital to maintaining the ethos and mission of our schools.

Paul Barber
Director of the Catholic Education Service

Education Sunday - 11th September 2016
24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

1st Reading: Exodus 32: 7-11, 13-14

The Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he threatened.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 51: 3-4, 12-13, 17, 19)

R. (Luke 15-18) I will rise and go to my father.

2nd Reading: 1 Timothy 12-17

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

Gospel Acclamation: 2 Corinthians 5:19

God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, and he has entrusted to us that they are reconciled.

Gospel: Luke 15:1-32 (Shorter version: Luke 15:1-10)

There will be rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner.

Homily

- The theme of Education Sunday is 'All are welcome'. There are good connections to be made with the Gospel which is all about mercy: nothing can keep us from the love of God, so all are welcome to his feast. Catholic schools are also places of mercy and welcome.
- In this week's gospel, Jesus tells the Pharisees the parables of the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep and the Lost Son. The underlying message in all of these parables is that God's mercy and love for us knows no bounds. Just as the Good Shepherd will not give up on the last sheep, so too must all schools nurture all their students, whatever their gifts and talents.
- Also, schools can be the place where God's mercy is often first encountered - especially for those who have wandered far from the faith. A good Catholic school can be a place of encounter with the faith that draws the pupil - and through them the whole family - back into a loving relationship with Christ through the Church.

Bidding Prayers suggestions

For all those working in schools at the start of this academic year: may they be an example of Christ's love and create a welcoming home for all students, especially anyone joining the school this year.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For all students: may they grow in their love and understanding of learning, and learn to nurture all the talents the Lord has given them to the best of their ability.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

For all parents and family: may the Holy Spirit guide them as they continue in their important task of nurturing a love of Christ in their children.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Suggested hymns for theme 'All are welcome'

All are welcome

Gather us in

Christ be our Light

The King of love my Shepherd is

Amazing Grace

Come Back to Me

Praise my soul, the King of Heaven

Sing of the Lord's Goodness

Our Father, we have wandered

Welcome all ye noble saints of old

Psalm setting

Psalm Songs, Volume 2: I will leave this place...

Hymns Old and New 637 - Gelineau setting of Psalm 51