



Catholic Schools Week 2017

Catholic Schools: Learning with Pope Francis to Care for Our Common Home

Welcome to Catholic Schools Week 2017

The theme of this year's Catholic Schools Week is **Catholic Schools: Learning with Pope Francis to Care for Our Common Home**. The themes for the individual days are very much calling us to action:

Day 1
Seeing

Day 2
Caring for

Day 3
Watching over

Day 4
Protecting

Day 5
Sharing

As we close the door on the Year of Mercy, we are now being called into action to care for our world and to care for each other. The Church reminds us that we have a duty of care to the world and everything in it, for 'she must above all protect mankind from self-destruction'. Pope Francis facilitates the type of learning that reminds us that we can change the world by changing our ways through receiving a good education. For Pope Francis, a good education begins in the home. It is within our families that we learn to respect human life and the world: 'In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life.' In the name of the Father, by the example of Jesus and through the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit, we continue to encounter God in our world, not just through the people we meet, but also through the physical world. In a homily delivered many years ago, we heard the following phrase: 'Our world is hurting to be loved.' We are stewards of creation, and, therefore, it is our job to be aware of the many issues that damage our world: pollution, climate change, drought, loss of biodiversity and the reducing respect for the dignity of all of God's creation. This does not mean that we merely research such issues and make empty statements about how they are unjust. Rather, *Laudato Si'* calls us to act on this injustice by teaching us to see the world, every living thing and all of our fellow human beings differently. We learn to see and to feel the ways in which we are intimately connected to creation. Pope Francis teaches us to see things differently so that we can learn to act differently. The challenge for all of us is to 'examine our lifestyles' by asking ourselves: Are my actions impacting on existing environmental issues? Am I resolved to making the world a better place for the next generation? Am I aware that people in the developing countries are suffering because of the actions and attitudes of the first world and that the world is, in fact, a common home for all? Can I improve my personal actions for the common good? These questions create space for dialogue on the issue of sustainability, which is far-reaching and can be a topic of discussion for many departments within our Catholic schools.

Again this year, resources for Catholic Schools Week will be available online. Three lessons are offered for Junior Cycle and two lessons for Senior Cycle Religious Education. Each lesson is based on the encyclical *Laudato Si'* and contains practices which support the national Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, as well as self-reflective practices as a way of supporting assessment in the classroom. There are also opportunities for staff to reflect on the content of this very rich encyclical.

Log on to www.catholicschools.ie to download the CSW 2017 resources.

Praise be to you, my Lord.
With every blessing,

The Resource Writing Team

Post-Primary



Thoughts for Each Day

Learning with Pope Francis to Care for Our Common Home

Monday
(Seeing)



Pope Francis took his name from St Francis of Assisi, because St Francis was known as someone who tried to bring peace, who cared for creation, and who loved the poor. In his letter on creation, *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis asks us to look at the earth as our common home, and everything in it as our brothers and sisters. In the letter he says, 'Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.' He presents us with a challenge. We all know that the environment is in crisis, so how will this generation answer the call to care for our common home? Lord, help us to be mindful of how we treat this fragile planet you have given us as our beautiful home.

Tuesday
(Caring for)



We live in a world fuelled by consumerism; a world of constantly wanting more and gaining little happiness from what we have. In fact, in his Christmas homily in 2015, Pope Francis stated that we are 'drunk with consumerism, appearance and extravagance'. Our priorities are facing the wrong way. In this letter, Pope Francis goes on to say that 'we lack an awareness of our common origin, of our mutual belonging and of a future to be shared with everyone'. There is a great lack of empathy among people. Equally, there is little forward thinking when it comes to using our natural resources. We care about the here and now: sometimes we only care about ourselves. We live in a world where 'I' is more important than 'We'. And yet, Pope Francis offers us a solution. If we develop this 'common awareness', it would 'enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life'. It is our duty to care for the world around us, and to care for one another. We are called to a 'conversion' – a change of attitude – metanoia. We need to refocus our priorities and put them facing the right way, towards a shared vision of respect, hope and love. 'Let ours be a time to be remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.' Let us strive to care for our common home.

Wednesday
(Watching over)



In his letter, Pope Francis talks about 'intergenerational solidarity'. Put in a simpler way, he asks, 'What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?' He also believes that we must think about the generations alive right now. Many people today are suffering and poor. One of the greatest injustices in the world is the lack of clean water. Women and girls can spend up to four hours a day drawing water in the developing world. This is time that could be spent by girls in classrooms receiving an education. In contrast, last year Irish people spent €76.5 million on bottled water, most of it unnecessarily. It takes nearly one thousand years for a plastic bottle to biodegrade. Do we take water for granted? Lord, help us to be grateful for water, so that we do not waste it or cause the environment to become ever more clogged with plastic. Help us to build a cleaner, fairer world.



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Thursday (Protecting)



In the Book of Genesis we are told that God made us 'stewards' over creation. Therefore, it is our responsibility to care for our common home and protect it. This means that we do not have the right to exploit the world – or human beings. Every living thing has a purpose – a value. 'Each creature reflects something of God and has a message to convey to us.' By virtue of our creation, we have an obligation to care for our common home. Pope Francis assures us that 'humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home'. This is not simply about every human being's relationship with the world; it is also about every human being's relationship with the poor. This letter, *Laudato Si'*, reflects Pope Francis' understanding that the term 'our common home' not only relates to our relationship with the world around us, but also to our relationship with each other. He describes us as an 'interdependent' world. 'Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start ... we are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts.' Protecting our common home gives us a sense of 'feeling at home' – a feeling of family.

Friday (Sharing)



St Matthew said, 'Whoever would be great among you must be your servant.' Diakonia, or service, is central to Christian teaching, as we are called, living out the example of Jesus, to serve one another.

We can be overly concerned with our private property, that is to say, the idea of ownership. Just think about how you feel when a sibling, parent or guardian tries to enter your room, or take your phone. While we do have the right to private property, we have to view this right in the context of what is in the best interests of others. In his letter, Pope Francis states clearly that the right to private property comes with a 'social mortgage'. He teaches us that we must focus on the common good in our common home as the common good is at the heart of sharing. Sharing with others, even during difficult times, makes things a little more manageable. In our large cities people can feel overcome by the pace of modern life, people can become isolated and separated from creation, but this can be overcome by developing meaningful relationships with others through sharing our common home. The first place we learn to share our common home and develop these close and warm relationships is in the family. The family is the 'basic cell of society'. With this in mind, think about a family, either real or on television, that is warm, inviting and loving. This is what the term 'common home' means: our family. This is 'one world' with a 'common plan'.





Liturgy for Catholic Schools Week 2017

(Can be used as a Liturgy of the Word and as part of a Liturgy of the Eucharist)

The space can be decorated using the symbols from the procession or these symbols can already be in place if a procession is not possible. (Suggested symbols of creation: water, fire (candle), plant, images of creatures, egg, etc.)

Entrance Song: Accompanying a procession of symbols representing creation.

Praise be to you, my Lord!

Sprinkling Rite:

(In the presence of a priest)

Priest: Dear brothers and sisters, Let us humbly beseech the Lord our God to bless this water he has created, which will be sprinkled on us as a memorial of our Baptism. May he help us by his grace to remain faithful to the Spirit we have received. *After a brief pause for silence, he continues with hands joined.*

Almighty, ever-living God, who willed that through water, the fountain of life and the source of purification, even souls should be cleansed and receive the gift of eternal life; be pleased, we pray, to bless this water, by which we seek protection on this your day, O Lord. Renew the living spring of your grace within us and grant that by this water we may be defended from all ills of spirit and body, and so approach you with hearts made clean and worthily receive your salvation. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Sprinkling Rite:

(In the absence of a priest)

All students are invited to proceed forward and bless themselves with holy water while singing 'Lava Me Domine'.

Collect:

(For the Progress of Peoples, Roman Missal)

O God, who gave one origin to all peoples and willed to gather from them one family for yourself, fill all hearts, we pray, with the fire of your love and kindle in them a desire for the just advancement of their neighbour, that, through the good things which you richly bestow upon all, each human person may be brought to perfection, every division may be removed, and equity and justice may be established in human society. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading:

A reading from the Book of Genesis (Gn 1:27–31)

Psalm: Psalm 104

R. Praise the Lord my Soul, Lord God how great you are.

Second Reading:

A reading from the Book of Revelation (Rv 15:1–8)

Gospel Reading:

A reading from the holy Gospel of Matthew (Mt 20:1–28)

Prayers of Intercession:

- (1) For the whole Church community. May we become instruments of God, which we have been called to be.
Lord hear us.
Lord graciously hear us.
- (2) For the members of our parish community. May we support one another as we strive to protect and fight for the common good in our common home.
Lord hear us.
Lord graciously hear us.
- (3) For the members of our school community. May we always promote the value of equality and human dignity as we work together every day.
Lord hear us.
Lord graciously hear us.
- (4) For those who are sick in mind, body or spirit. May they experience God's loving care and comforting hand in their hour of need.
Lord hear us.
Lord graciously hear us.
- (5) For those who have died.
Lord hear us.
Lord graciously hear us.
- (6) For ourselves. May we find strength in God's love to work towards a future where we make the necessary changes to protect our planet.
Lord hear us.
Lord graciously hear us.

Recommendation: Eucharistic Prayer II

Reflection: In his document *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis includes two prayers, 'A prayer for our earth' and 'A Christian prayer in union with creation', that could be incorporated into your liturgy as a point of reflection (e.g. Post-Communion or after the reading of the Gospel).

Music Suggestions:

1. In You Creation Finds Its Joy (McDonagh)
2. Christ Our Light (Warner)
3. Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (Temple)
4. The Lord is my Light (Walker)
5. Surrexit Christus (Taizé)
6. Lava Me Domine (Lécot)
7. Holy Spirit Lord of Life (McCann)
8. Shine, Jesus Shine (Kendrick)
9. Brother Sun, Sister Moon (Donovan)
10. Great and Wonderful are your Deeds (Lawton)

Acclamations: Sing the Mass Collection