



WELCOME

to Catholic Schools Week 2020

26 January – 2 February 2020

The theme of this year's Catholic Schools Week is 'Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony with God's Creation'. The theme encourages us to see that we all have a responsibility to care for the earth, not just for our own future, but for the future of every one of God's creatures.

The theme for each day is as follows:

- Monday:** Living in Harmony with God
- Tuesday:** Living in Harmony with our Neighbours
- Wednesday:** Living in Harmony with All Generations
- Thursday:** Living in Harmony with the Earth
- Friday:** Living in Harmony in our Catholic School

Between 2015 and 2017, Trócaire's Lenten campaigns focused on 'Climate Change, Climate Justice'. In 2015, Pope Francis' wrote his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which was the basis of Catholic Schools Week in 2017. This year, we re-echo the messages of that encyclical, but also present the apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit*. It highlights key issues in society and gives us a clear direction on what to do. Pope Francis has very clearly delivered the message to Catholic people all over the world: 'The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change' (LS, 13). Part of this change is to recognise that we live in this world in harmony with the world and those around us. If we are conscious of our relationships with God, our neighbours, all generations, the earth and our Catholic school, we can identify the steps it takes to live in harmony. Pope Francis challenges us to look at

our lifestyles. We must become aware of the impact our lives have on the lives of others. He asks for justice and equality, as it is clear that the vulnerable all around the world are further impacted by our actions here in the first world. The hope of Catholic Schools Week 2020 is that we realise how powerful each and everyone of us is and that even the smallest changes can have the biggest impact.

Again, this year, resources for Catholic Schools Week will be available online. All lessons have resources for both Junior and Senior Cycle. Each lesson 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. They also provide extension exercises as an option for your students.

Log on to www.catholicschools.ie to download the CSW 2020 resources.

Praise be to you, my Lord.
With every blessing.
The Resource Writing Team.





THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Monday: Living in Harmony with God

The theme of this year's Catholic Schools Week is 'Living in Harmony with God's Creation'. A stress is placed on 'harmony'. The Peace Pilgrim quote states that 'when you find peace within yourself, you become the kind of person who can live at peace with others.' In order to look outwards, we must first look inwards. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis says that 'we are capable of going out of ourselves towards the other.' We are capable. He points out that this can only come with a rejection of self-centredness and self-absorption. In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis describes young people as the 'now' of God. Young people enrich the world. He goes on to say to young people that 'you are important to him, for you are the work of his hands. That is why he is concerned about you and looks to you with affection.' It is clear that Pope Francis has a very deep understanding of the harmony that exists between God and the young person. When asked what he sees in young people, he says, 'a young person stands on two feet as adults do, but unlike adults whose feet are parallel, he always has one foot forward, ready to set out, to spring ahead.' Pope Francis acknowledges the strength that young people have. In fact, young people can change the world. This is what we are called to do!

Tuesday: Living in Harmony with our Neighbours

In *Laudato Si'*, we are called to care for our common home. Pope Francis highlights the fact that we all have a responsibility to care for the earth for future generations. 'If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society.' We are called to love our neighbour as ourselves. In 2019, Pope Francis opened the Season of Creation on 1

September. This continued until 4 October, which is the feast day of St Francis of Assisi. In his address on 1 September he stated that we need a change that will 'free us from the slavery of consumerism'. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and pretend that the world as we know it is not changing. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby says that 'the outlook of climate change is not potentially bad ... it is potentially fatal for the most fragile countries and regions on earth and for the billions of people who live in them.' We can help, one person at a time, one step at a time. Pope Francis encourages Catholics to make 'courageous decisions' and undertake 'prophetic actions' and for political leaders to have a real commitment 'for directing the planet toward life, not death'. Together let us recite Pope Francis' prayer for the earth.

*All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.*

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

*Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.*

*Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and
sisters, harming no one.*

*O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and
forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.*

*Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world
and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.*

*Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the
expense of the poor and the earth.*

*Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled
with awe and contemplation, to recognise that we are
profoundly united with every creature as we journey
towards your infinite light.*

We thank you for being with us each day.

*Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice,
love and peace. Amen.*





Wednesday: Living in Harmony with all Generations

Today we celebrate the role that older people play in the lives of younger people. And vice versa! This reciprocity is a very special relationship, the benefits of which, knows no bounds. In 2 Timothy 1:5, St Paul says 'I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois, and in your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded, now lives in you also.' As young people, we learn a lot from the older people in our lives. Very often, the things we value most are the values that have been handed down from our parents, or our grandparents. In *Amoris Laetitia* (191), Pope Francis reminds us that a society 'will move forward if it respects the wisdom of the elderly.' But in *Christus Vivit* Pope Francis points out the contribution that young people can make also. He says, 'we cannot just say that young people are the future of our world. They are its present; even now, they are helping to enrich it' (64). He goes on to say that: 'A young person stands on two feet as adults do, but unlike adults, whose feet are parallel, he always has one foot forward, ready to set out, to spring ahead' (139). A young person has the ability to do great things, to push forward and reach outwards. As Catholics, we need to listen to the words of the Gospel of Mark (16:15): 'Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.'

Thursday: Living in Harmony with the Earth

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reminds us that we are stewards of God's creation. We are simply looking after it for each other and for future generations. 'Christian stewardship means caring for the planet and all the life on it that God has created. It means working to make sure that all the goods of the earth are distributed in a fair and just way. Solidarity with others, especially with people who are poor, is the fruit of stewardship.' We are called to examine our own lifestyles and ask ourselves the questions: 'How do I care for the planet?'; 'How do I care for life?'; 'What part do I play in the distribution of the earth's goods?'; 'Am I fair?'; 'Am

I just?'; 'In what way do I show my solidarity with others?'; 'In what way do I show my solidarity with the poor?' While there is a call on governments and countries to drastically change the way in which we use the earth's resources, we have to start with ourselves. We must change our ways in order to ensure the survival of the earth. Pope Francis says, 'the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment ... If we can overcome individualism, we will truly be able to develop a different lifestyle and bring about significant changes in society' (LS, 208).

Friday: Living in Harmony in our Catholic Schools

Each school has a mission statement: a statement of our aims and our values. However, in a Catholic school, we should see our Catholic ethos in our mission statement. It is a good time to think about the things that are valued in our schools. Are we a loving school? A forgiving school? A school where we trust one another? A school that helps the poor? A school that ensures that every member of the community is safe, where everyone can be the best version of themselves? Are we a school that includes everyone, regardless of their abilities, nationality, religion or gender? In the *Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of Other Faiths in Catholic Secondary Schools* (Aiveen Mullally, JMB/AMCSS) it states that, 'the Catholic school is a Christian community where every pupil is valued equally and given a genuine experience of belonging.' Today, we ask ourselves, does this describe my school? If it does, think about the ways in which you contribute to this inclusion. If this does not describe your school, think about the ways in which you contribute to this lack of inclusion. It may be an idea to take the 'Harmony Challenge' and try to change your ways. Let us all make a commitment to make one change today that will change someone else's life – something that will help us live in harmony in our Catholic schools.

