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Monday, 15 July 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On 8th September this year, the Church in England and Wales will mark the 176th Education Sunday. As we commence the beginning of a new academic year, let us entrust to Almighty God all who are involved in the provision of Catholic education in our schools, colleges and universities. We pray that Christ the Teacher will strengthen their faith and fill their hearts with courage and hope.

The Gospel reading for Education Sunday is taken from St Mark's Gospel (7:31-37): *"He makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."*

Our Lord Jesus Christ came among us and brought fulfilment to those who were searching for peace, healing and joy. Revealing the love of God the Father to mankind, Christ is the one and only way, truth, and life. Led by the light of the Holy Spirit, the words of the Holy Gospels guide us in His way, draw our minds into His truth, and invite our hearts to be filled with His life.

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school. As "the way, the truth, and the life" Christ is both the object and subject of Catholic education. A Catholic educational institution seeks to root the Gospel of Christ in the minds and lives of students, providing a holistic formation that promotes human flourishing, inspiring a lifelong love of learning, and fostering the virtues that will assist children and young people to discover in themselves and in others the Truth, Goodness and Beauty of God.

On Education Sunday, it is important we give thanks to Almighty God for all who govern, lead, teach, guide, and support the children and young people in our Catholic schools, colleges and universities.

Placing all our trust in God's grace, we pray that Catholic education will continue to make Christ known across our lands, supporting parents in the religious formation of their children, integrating faith with culture and being of service to our society. Let us give thanks for all the ways in which Christ our Lord and Teacher has been present with us and invite Him to be with us throughout the coming year.

Assuring you of my prayers for you and for all our Catholic schools, colleges and universities, I remain,

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads '+ Marcus Stock'.

✠ **Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds**
Chairman of the Catholic Education Service