

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK 2017: THOUGHTS OF THE DAY

Monday: Today is the first day of Catholic Schools Week 2017. This year we are learning with Pope Francis about caring for our common home. Our common home is not just the community or the country we live in, but our entire world. Caring for our home is so important that Pope Francis wrote a letter to remind everyone about our responsibility to love and care for the earth, called 'Laudato Si'. Today we think of the beauty of the world that God created for us. Our world is a gift from God. From the shining sun to the twinkling stars, the deep blue seas and the snowy mountain tops, God made it all. From the colourful flowers to the beautiful animals, God made it all. We can see the beauty of God's world all around us if we stop and look. When we take time to see the beauty of our world we can learn how important it is and we can remember to thank God for the beauty of his creation. Lord, help us to always see the beauty of our common home. Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father

Tuesday: Today we are asked to think about how we can care for our common home. God gave us the earth and the earth gives us many gifts which help us to live. It gives us water, food and energy. It gives us so much to help us care for ourselves, but Pope Francis asks us to think about how we can care for the earth. We can try to use only what we need and try to live our lives in ways that help the earth. We can do this by recycling, wasting less water and caring for plants and animals. The care we give the earth shows God how much we love him and the beautiful home he has given us. Lord, help us to care for our common home. Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father

Wednesday: Today is St. Brigid's Day. St. Brigid was someone who cared deeply for the world and all the creations in it. In his letter, *Laudate Si*, 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. Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father

Thursday: Today we think about how we can protect our common home. God has entrusted us with the care of the earth. We can protect and care for our home in all we do each day; for example, by reducing our rubbish, recycling and using the resources of our world carefully. We pray that God will give us the courage to make changes in how we treat and use the resources of our home so that every creature on earth can see the beauty of his creation and come to know their responsibility to be a steward of the earth. We pray that we may all work to protect our common home. Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father

Friday: As Catholic Schools Week comes to a close we are asked to think about how we can share our common home. Our world is a gift to all who live here: the people, the animals and the plants. Our world is not always shared equally: there are people who have no home, no food or water; people forced to leave the place they live because of war, natural disasters, famine or drought; plants and animals treated cruelly. In the letter he wrote to us, Pope Francis told us that ‘we must share with others’. This reminds us of the words of Jesus, who told us to love one another, to be kind and caring. To show God how much we love him and how thankful we are for the home he has given us, we have to work to share our home equally with all who live here. Lord, help us to share our common home. Together we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us: Our Father