

CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK 2016



Learning to be Merciful



Letter to be read at all Masses
on Education Sunday 31st January 2016.



Scottish Catholic Education Service
an agency of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland



My dear people,

In this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, Catholic Education Week invites us all to reflect on how we are "Learning to be Merciful".

We have all been learning about Mercy since we were children when we began to learn about Jesus and, through Him, became closer to God the Father.

Those who first helped us to understand the importance of mercy and forgiveness were our parents and grandparents who formed us as people of compassion, ready to pardon those who did us harm.

Through the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost [prodigal] son, we learned about the nature of God being that of a loving Father *"who never gives up until he has forgiven the wrong and overcome rejection with compassion and mercy."* (Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy)

As Christians, we believe that mercy is at the heart of our faith, a force which fills our hearts with love and can overcome any obstacle. We understand that we are called to show mercy to others because we ourselves have been shown mercy by God. This is a profound lesson for us all, one to be taken to heart in our personal lives, in our family homes, our workplaces, our schools, our parishes and in the Church overall.

Our credibility as Christians rests in how we show merciful and compassionate love. Pope Francis calls on each one of us to be a witness to mercy, to show mercy to others through our words, our gestures and our actions *"so as to touch the hearts of all people and inspire them once more to find the road that leads to the Father."* (Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy)

Throughout the course of this Jubilee Year of Mercy, using resources supplied by the Scottish Catholic Education Service, teachers will help our children to learn more about their Christian calling to Mercy, referring particularly to the *Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy*.

We should all reflect on these works, on how we are living as disciples of the Lord through our commitment to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned and bury the dead.

We should remember that the Lord also asks us to attend to spiritual needs - to counsel the doubtful, to instruct the ignorant, to admonish sinners, to comfort the afflicted, forgive offences and pray for the living and the dead.

I pray that you will take this opportunity to reflect on your own witness to mercy and on how we can all help our children to know the truth of the Lord's words: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Appeal for Catholic Teachers

At this time last year I appealed to young people to come forward to become teachers. Again this year I ask young people to give serious consideration to my appeal. I also urge parents, grandparents and teachers to encourage young people to pursue Teaching as a vital career choice.

Given the current shortages of teachers and Head Teachers, I also want to appeal to Catholic teachers who are not currently working in Catholic schools. My request is this: please seek an appointment in a Catholic school; ask your Council employer for a transfer to a Catholic school. We urgently need committed Catholic teachers to be working in Catholic schools.

The Bishops and our advisers have appealed to Scottish Government Ministers to ensure that sufficient teachers are being trained to work in Catholic schools. We are working hard with the University of Glasgow and others to improve the supply of teachers who will be able to contribute to the provision of Catholic education for our children and young people.

I must stress that this is a critical issue which may have significant consequences if we cannot produce more teachers soon.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

✠ *Philip Tartaglia*,
Archbishop of Glasgow
President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland