



Welcome to Catholic Schools Week 2016

The theme of Catholic Schools Week this year is **Catholic Schools: Challenged to Proclaim God's Mercy**. Catholic schools are challenged to proclaim God's mercy in myriad ways. Not least within the religious education classroom, where teachers open the minds and hearts of students to God. This privilege is a clear example of responding to the Christian 'challenge' to witness Christ in daily life. This year's resource for Catholic Schools Week is a response to that challenge. It offers different opportunities to explore God's mercy with the whole school community.

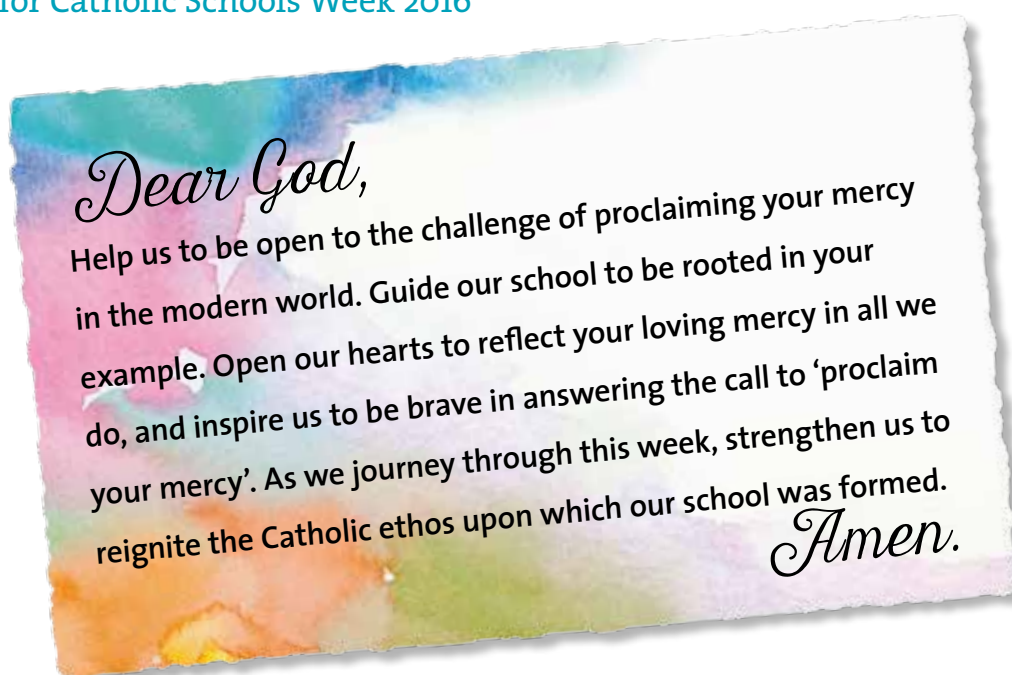
Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'* calls us to care for our common home. It encourages a sustainable response to life on this planet, in all its forms. Pope Francis encourages all of us to reflect on our way of being in the world and to consider how we might reduce our environmental impact. Responding to this call, CSW 2016 resources are available free to download online. Three lessons are offered for both junior and senior cycle religious education. Each lesson pays particular attention to the development of key skills and includes a reflective practice dimension.

Furthermore, opportunities for staff reflection on the theme are suggested. Each member of the Catholic school community is equally challenged to proclaim God's mercy. The inclusion of a staff resource supports reflection on what it means to be a Catholic school in 2016.

Log on to www.catholicschools.ie to download the CSW 2016 resources.

With every blessing,
The Resource Writing Team

Prayer for Catholic Schools Week 2016





Thoughts for Each Day

Challenged to Proclaim God's Mercy

What

What does mercy look like in action? It is forgiveness, compassion, understanding, support, a listening ear, non-judgement, love and gentleness. In the Sacrament of Confirmation we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Saint Paul writes that the nine fruits of the Spirit are **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control**. These are all the signs of the Christian life in a person. Unlike other gifts that are gone once we give them away, these spiritual gifts grow in us the more we use them. They witness to God and inspire others to act the same way towards people.

Who

It is easy to love those who love us. It is easy to be generous with those who give to us. Showing mercy to the people closest to us is not a challenge. The life of Jesus calls us to a different path. His path led to Calvary, to a hill. It is an uphill journey that is not always easy. As Catholics, we are baptised into a family that values the example Jesus set for us. He proclaimed mercy to those on the fringes of society. It is usually easy to identify people who inwardly cry for mercy. The challenge of the Gospel is to proclaim that mercy to those in most need. These people ought to always be our first priority.

Where

We do not have to travel or perform heroic deeds to be a person of mercy. These days, it is difficult to fulfil the duties we already have as a student – a son/daughter, a sibling, a friend, or the member of a sports team. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux was a young French nun who lived in an enclosed order. She was unknown, unimportant. In her convent she spoke little but smiled a lot. She was easy to live with. After her death, her diary revealed a young woman of strong patience and love. Although she lived away from society she prayed all the time for those working in the missions, for sinners and for those who





needed God's mercy the most. She was often irritated by the older nuns in her enclosure but never showed it. Instead she asked to work in the hardest areas of the convent and prayed for an increase in mercy in herself for those nuns who were harsh with her or who annoyed her. She died in obscurity, but God honoured her efforts and she became a saint. Wherever we are, we are always in the perfect place to proclaim mercy. And it is often doing this in the most subdued way that is valued the most.

When

There is never a 'wrong' time to show mercy to someone. When we are presented with someone whose heart is breaking, who cannot forgive themselves for something they have done, immediately is always the right time. To use an opportunity to take someone out of suffering is a most noble act. Although there are many people who suffer material poverty, it is the poverty of the soul that breaks people the most. In lifting someone up in moments like this and showing them how loved they are by God, and how important and unique they are, we help heal and recreate new hearts. We participate in the creative work of the Father.

How

It is not in everyone's nature to be outgoing, or to initiate a conversation about topics that can be difficult to talk about. We all have the divine presence within us that manifests itself differently. God is funny in some people; he is brave in others; he is sociable and popular in many. But he is also understated, shy, humble and cautious in many more. Whatever way God manifests himself in you, that is how he wants you to reveal him. Sometimes all we need to do is sit with someone and just 'be'. Sometimes there are no words. We can listen in a non-judgemental manner. Wherever and however God has created you, you are perfect and planted in the perfect garden to sow God's mercy.





Liturgy for Catholic Schools Week 2016

(Adaptable as the Liturgy of the Word)

The space can be set up very simply, using the symbols brought forward in the procession. However, the water should get a special place.

Entrance Song: Accompanying a procession of symbols representing a Catholic school.

Sprinkling Rite:

(In place of the Penitential Rite)

Leader: It is a challenge to proclaim God's mercy every single day. In a world that is constantly changing and where we are challenged to live out our faith, we need to turn to God for strength and support in carrying his message. And so together we pray:

All: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

All students are then invited to process forward and bless themselves with holy water.

First Reading:

A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah.
(Jer 1:4-5, 17-19)

Psalm: My lips will tell of your help.

(Ps 70: 1-6, 15, 17)

R. My lips will tell of your help.

Second Reading:

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.
(1 Cor 12:31-13:13)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, Alleluia!

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord; no one can come to the Father except through me.
Alleluia.

Gospel Reading:

A reading from the holy Gospel of Matthew.
(Mt 25:31-46)

Prayers of Intercession

- (1) For the whole Church community. May we offer God's mercy to those who are in need of it.
Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
- (2) For the members of our parish community.
May we be strong enough to face the challenge to proclaim God's mercy on a daily basis within our community of faith and beyond.
Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
- (3) For the members of our school community. May we experience God's mercy from all who belong to our school family and strive to live our lives as examples of God's love and mercy.
Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
- (4) For those who are sick in mind, body or spirit. May they experience God's mercy during the challenges they face in their daily lives.
Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
- (5) For those who have died. May they experience God's mercy as they join him in their eternal resting place.
Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.
- (6) For ourselves. May we show others God's compassion and mercy, especially when it is a challenge to do so.
Lord Hear Us.
Lord Graciously Hear Us.

(Prayer service could end here, followed by a suitable piece of music)

Recommendation: Eucharistic Prayer II

Music Suggestions:

1. Eirím Suas Le Dia (McDonagh)
2. Seinn Alleluia (Mc Donagh)
3. Eagle's Wings (Joncas)
4. Servant Song (Gillard)
5. The Servant King (Kendrick)
6. God's Holy Gifts (Sexton)
7. Bí Íosa im Chríose (Traditional)
8. Pity then the Child (Lawton)
9. The Lord is my Shepherd (Lawton)
10. Your Mercy Like Rain (Cooney) *Sprinkling*
11. Acclamations: Sing the Mass Collection