**Our Catholic Schools’ Week 2022**

**Theme: Reaching Out to Others**

Thank you for welcoming me to your parish community today. I am ……………….. from ………………………… school, one of the Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust Schools. Today is Education Sunday. A National opportunity to celebrate and pray for all in Education. This year in the Diocese of Northampton Education Sunday falls in Catholic Schools’ Week. We are reflecting ever more deeply on our Diocesan calling to be Missionary Disciples. We are given an opportunity during Catholic Schools’ Week to continue to foster, build up and enhance relationships between our parishes, schools, and homes for the good of all. God calls us together as a community, a family. We are called together to know and share the love of God with others.

During our Catholic Schools’ Week this year all our Diocesan Schools will be reflecting on the theme of ‘Reaching Out to Others.’ Today in the Gospel of Luke chapter 15 we are presented with the famous parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. In each of these stories we encounter someone who is reaching out, going out and searching. The shepherd reaches out to find the one lost sheep, the woman searches for the lost coin and the devoted Father reaches out in love to both of his sons. It has been said that many of us in today’s society are time poor. Each of us has many responsibilities and concerns which demand our focus and attention. It can be easy to rush from one activity to another. In the midst of this busyness, we are invited to notice those around us and their needs, this can be a challenge. It can be tempting to view interruptions to our routine and schedules with frustration, especially if we have many deadlines to meet. In these parables of Jesus, we see attentiveness and concern in action. The Shepherd notices the one sheep from the 99 who is missing, the woman notices the lost coin and the Father is conscious of the needs of both of his sons, going out of his way to try to respond to their needs. Each of the characters in these stories give of themselves, of their time and energy. They are present to the needs that they see. They are willing to adapt their routines and schedules to accommodate the need that they notice.

Our Catholic Schools are communities rich in faith, hope and love that ‘reach out’, like the woman looking for the lost coin in the house. We have the opportunity to reach out and find those staff and young people with whom we can share our Gospel values and pray. We are also called to notice those like the lost sheep who are on the margins. In the Gospels we see that Jesus often allows himself to be ‘interrupted’ by the needs of others and he brings them healing and peace we do this in our Catholic Schools across the Diocese.

As I leave today I will present you with a small prayer card including a link to the Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust Schools. Do take a look at our webs site where you will find lots of information about our local Catholic Schools.

Let us pray:

God our Father, help us to reflect your love by noticing the needs of others. Give us the grace to reach out to help and serve others in our homes, our families, our parishes, our schools and in the communities and society in which we live. Fill us with the power of your love and help us to know that you are with us always, guiding us on life’s journey. We ask this in the Name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Acknowledgments:

Catholic Schools Week resources Nores.org.uk

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https://www.olicatschools.org/chaplaincy