



A Pastoral Message on the Occasion of *Education Sunday* 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On Education Sunday, we join as one in offering our prayers and expressing our deep gratitude for everyone involved in the life of our Catholic schools.

Each year, we celebrate the teachers and the staff in our schools who work tirelessly to ensure our young people receive the very best Catholic education. This education prepares them for their future careers, but most importantly, it draws them into a deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus, so that they can grow in wisdom, knowledge and holiness.

I know how hard our headteachers, teachers and staff work to put their pupils first and give them the tools they need to flourish. For that, I once again express my sincerest gratitude and assure you of my prayers.

Headteachers, teachers and staff cannot do it alone – they need the support of the CEOs of our Catholic Academy Trusts, governors, chaplains, office teams and volunteers. Each one of you plays a crucial role in helping our schools to live out their Catholic values and nurture our young people. Thank you all for your service – please know that each of you is valued and appreciated.

Alongside our schools, I want to recognise the parents and carers who make so many daily sacrifices to give their children the love and care they need to flourish. I know being a parent can sometimes feel like a thankless task, but please know that I am deeply grateful for your daily witness of love, and for the endless sacrifices you make for your children. Parents and carers lay the foundations upon which all education is built, and Catholic education can only flourish if the partnership between home and school is nurtured.

This partnership has to be centred on Christ Jesus, who is the vine. Our Lord tells us to abide in him “as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me” (cf. John 15:4-5). Jesus is the vine; we are the branches. As we continue on this journey together, we must remember to remain close to Christ so that we may bear fruit in abundance.

St Oscar Romero, reflecting on this Gospel passage, explains that in this “language of Christ” we find a “beautiful definition of grace” which is “communion with the very same love and truth that God has revealed to us”¹. By remaining close to Christ in all that we do – and especially in cultivating young people through Catholic education – we bear the fruits of good works in communion with God, and reveal His love to those in our care.

So, as we begin this new academic year, please continue to work together as communities of faith and love, forming our young people in the love of Christ. Please be assured of my continued gratitude and prayers.

May Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, watch over our families, schools and parishes.

With every blessing for the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a cross symbol followed by stylized cursive letters, likely 'JW', and a horizontal line underneath.

Most Rev John Wilson

Archbishop of Southwark

Given at Southwark on 10 September 2026

¹ https://www.romerotrusted.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ART_Homilies_Vol4_141_GraceDivineGiftEasterThatChurchConveysHumankind.pdf - paragraph 15 and 11 (pages 3&4).