

SUNDAY PLUS

Bring the lost home

Love is all we need

By Michael George

"Thank you for giving me a second chance," was a message in a card from a Year 6 pupil, on his last day of primary school. It was a message that stood out amongst other cards expressing gratitude for lessons learned in maths or history, or for sporting or musical opportunities, or a range of other things associated with school life. I am reminded of that special card when reflecting on today, Education Sunday, and on today's Gospel.

Working in a school is an enormously privileged position because anybody working in a school makes a genuine difference to the lives of children. This difference results from things the adults in the school say, but much more through the example that is shown. In a Catholic school, we are called to strive to live out the teachings of the Gospels, to be witnesses.

In God's eyes every individual is equally special and every individual is loved beyond measure. We can personalise that – in God's eyes there is no-one else now, in the past or

in the future, who matters more than I do. Each of us can say this and it is through this same lens that each of us is called to view one another.

Years on, the pupil who wrote the card may not remember any words that were said but will remember the way he felt he was treated. I hope that he would say that he was treated with love, treated as Jesus would have treated him.

Michael George has served Catholic primary schools as a teacher and headteacher for more than twenty years.




The lost sheep

By Lucy Russell

Education is a common good. Teachers want to make a difference, do good things, and make an impact on the world. In the classroom I'm very aware that there are times when I take the hard work and good behaviour of ninety-nine per cent of my class for granted, as I give additional focus and support to the one per cent who might otherwise not demonstrate the best behaviour for learning or put in their maximum effort. Teachers

can have a significant impact on the lives of their students. Poor behaviour in children doesn't mean they won't become good adults. Teaching is about helping young people to discover their inner talents and setting them on the right path. One of my favourite quotes is from Pope Benedict XVI, "Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary." The time spent with the one per cent is invaluable.

Dr Lucy Russell is the author of Who Do You Say You Are?, available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

Lord, the lost sheep that you carried home on your shoulder was probably grubby and smelly, but you didn't mind. So often, Lord, I want life to be neat and tidy, but it rarely works out in that way. Please help me to find you even when everything seems messy and unnecessarily complicated.  Amen.

A good shepherd is tender; he has that tenderness of closeness, he knows the sheep one by one, by name, and he takes care of each one as if it were the only one, to the point that when he returns home tired after a day of work, and realises that one is missing, he goes out to work again in search of that one, and carries it back home with him, on his shoulders.

Pope Francis

Feast of the week

Wednesday 14 September

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Did you know that St Helena, the fourth-century mother of the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine, is also the patron saint of archaeologists? This is because she is attributed with finding and excavating Jesus' cross, the nails with which he was crucified and his tunic.

When Helena became a Christian, Constantine gave her the title "Augusta" and added free access

to the imperial treasury as she searched the then known world for Christian shrines. Where there were only pagan shrines, she made them into churches, often dedicating them to Mary.

According to legend, Helena found the cross in Jerusalem and identified it when a dying woman touched it and was cured of her illness. Constantine immediately ordered the construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre above the site of the discovery.

Tradition says that Helena placed one of the nails of the crucifixion into her son's helmet to protect him.

Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

Today:
Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14
1 Timothy 1:12-17
Luke 15:1-32

Monday:
1 Corinthians
11:17-26, 33
Luke 7:1-10

Tuesday:
1 Corinthians
12:12-14, 27-31
Luke 7:11-17

Wednesday:
Numbers 21:4-9
Philippians 2:6-11
John 3:13-17

Thursday:
Hebrews 5:7-9
John 19:25-27
or Luke 2:33-35

Friday:
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Luke 8:1-3

Saturday:
1 Corinthians
15:35-37, 42-49
Luke 8:4-15

Next Sunday:
Amos 8:4-7
1 Timothy 2:1-8
Luke 16:1-13