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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This year, the Catholic Church in England and Wales will observe Education Sunday on 13th September, the Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The Gospel reading this year for the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, is taken from St Matthew's Gospel:

At that time: Peter came up and said to Jesus, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.'

Matthew 18:21-35

As the new academic year begins in our Catholic schools, colleges and universities, and rejoicing in the overflowing forgiveness of Our Heavenly Father which is revealed to us in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, we place before Almighty God in prayer all the pupils and students, staff members and leaders, governors and directors of our educational institutions.

During this special Jubilee Year of St Francis of Assisi, proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the Saint's death, we also pray that we will be inspired to imitate the Poor Man of Assisi to work for peace, live simply, be of service to the poor, and trustworthy stewards of God's creation.

On Education Sunday, we give thanks to the Lord for the vocations of all who work within the Catholic sector: the teaching and support staff, chaplains, school leaders and governors. It is through their commitment and hard work that pupils and students in our schools, colleges and universities can thrive and contribute to society, through their formation and education.

In the academic year ahead, let us endeavour to give witness to the message of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace in the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to pray that our Catholic schools, colleges and universities will be beacons of His good news in our communities.

With every blessing, I remain,

+ Marcus

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ,

The Rt Rev Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds

Chairman of the Catholic Education Service

Catholic Education Service

An agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

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