



39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX  
Tel: 020 7901 1900  
Fax: 020 7901 1939  
Email: [general@catholiceducation.org.uk](mailto:general@catholiceducation.org.uk)  
[www.catholiceducation.org.uk](http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk)

## BISHOP MARCUS' CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

18 December 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Throughout this last year, all of us have had to find ways of supporting our families, communities, schools and parishes during a very stressful time and a period of immense challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted upon the lives of millions of peoples across all nations, cultures and religions. This virus has affected every person and forced us to change the way we live.

For this reason, the season of Advent this year has been for us a time of longing and expectation like no other. We pray for health, wellbeing, and a return to a life free from the restrictions under which we have had to learn to live.

Consequently, as this school term and calendar year draws to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the governing bodies and academy trusts for the strategic lead which you have taken in guiding our schools through this time. I wish to thank our headteachers and school leaders for the incredible day-to-day ministry which you have exercised to keep our schools open and to enable our children and young people to receive the education which is so vital to the flourishing of their current and future lives. I desire to thank too, teachers, learning assistants, chaplains and all of the staff in our schools for your tireless energy and resilience in managing the complex and frequently changing responsibilities which you have been required to undertake to permit learning and teaching and the spiritual life of the school to be undertaken safely and effectively.

The strains which you have had to face cannot be underestimated and will, I know, have impacted upon the personal wellbeing of a great many of you. Yet, with immense self-sacrifice and determination, our schools have put the welfare of children and young people first. You have not only given stability to the pupils in our schools in a time of uncertainty but also been a bulwark of support to their parents, families and communities.

The Church and the whole of our society owes you all a great deal of gratitude.

May God bless you, your families and loved ones in these joyful Advent and Christmas seasons, and keep you safe and well throughout the Year of Our Lord 2021.

With the assurance of my prayers for you all,  
I remain, yours in Christ Jesus

*+ Marcus Stock*

✠ Marcus Stock

Chairman of Catholic Education Service

Bishop of Leeds