



The Most Rev. John Wilson, BA, STB, STL, PhD, KC*HS, GCGCO
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Ms Leonore Fernandes
Headteacher
The Federation of St Joseph's Catholic Schools
Woodend
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8 June 2022

Dear Ms Fernandes

Thank you for your kind letter of 22 May. Please forgive my delayed reply; several engagements have caused me to be away from the office of late.

It was a joy and a privilege to visit the Federation schools, and to meet the schools community. I was delighted to note the sense of joy and harmony which pervades it.

As you say, it is a privilege to teach, to nurture, and to guide the pupils. I am grateful to you and your staff for enabling them to become disciples of the Lord Jesus in a safe environment: where they are supported as they build and deepen their relationship with the Lord Jesus; pursue truth in an academic culture; and actively grow in virtue.

With gratitude, esteem, and with every blessing

Yours sincerely in Christ

The Most Reverend John Wilson
Archbishop of Southwark



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St Joseph's Pupils Leadership Team
The Federation of St Joseph's Catholic Schools
Woodend
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Dear Young People

Thank you for writing to me on behalf of all the pupils at St Joseph's. I was delighted to read in your letter how happy you are in school. I was very happy, too, when I came to spend the day at St Joseph's, and to celebrate Holy Mass with you. I'm also looking forward to receiving the honey from your school apiary: I love honey; thank you!

I enjoyed my visit to St Joseph's - it was a lovely day, and one I shall remember for a very long time, especially when you asked me to bless your school oak tree. One of God's friends from the Old Testament, Prophet Isaiah reminds us that the Lord asks us to be like oak trees "of righteousness". What he means is that we must love the Lord, who has *blessed us* in this world, so that we might love each other: just as oak trees are strong and give shelter, so must we know that our strength comes from the God who *planted us* and tends us, because he loves us, and wants us to use our talents and abilities for the good of others and society, just as your oak tree will grow to provide shade and safety for the good of everyone in the school.

The best way we can grow as God wants us to grow, is through prayer, most especially when we gather together as beloved friends of the Lord Jesus to celebrate the Holy Mass and remember how the tree of the cross, became the tree of life for us. In response to the love of God the Father, the Lord Jesus gave himself up for us so that we could know, without a doubt, how much God loves us – absolutely, and without exception. By that act of divine love, we can know how much we are loved, and then share that same love with the world. This is what it means to be friends and disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Please pray for me, knowing that I shall also be praying for you, and all those whom you love.

Yours sincerely in Christ

The Most Reverend John Wilson
Archbishop of Southwark