

# Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith and Resilience

*This short prayer service is based around the tree planted in the school grounds last year as part of the Catholic Schools Week Mass. It uses the symbols for the key daily themes for Catholic Schools Week 2021 – Faith, Learning, Love, Resilience, and Hope. These words need to be cut out, decorated and laminated, so they can be suspended from the trees branches or made into a mobile using wire coat hangers. The following picture symbols could be used instead: Faith – Cross; Learning - Book; Love – Heart; Resilience – Clenched Fist; Hope – Candle. A short prayer is then read by a student. When all five symbols are in place, pray the concluding prayer as an act of dedication or a school promise.*

**N.B.** *As schools are currently closed, teachers may want to use a small tree or plant of their own to represent the CSW tree planted on school grounds. The teacher can attach the words/symbols as a selected pupil reads the prayer during an online remote session.*

**+ In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. + Amen.**

**Leader:** Lord, we come together to mark Catholic Schools Week 2021. No-one could have foreseen in Catholic Schools Week 2020 how different life would be twelve months later. Life for all of us has changed so much and in ways that are not always easy or comfortable. This year we focus on Schools as Communities of Faith and Resilience. Let us be mindful of the powerful role our Catholic schools play in the lives of our young people. They are a source of comfort, care, belonging and strength. We give thanks for all the school staff who have worked tirelessly to keep teaching and learning going and to keep our young people engaged and connected. Our prayer for every person in our school community is:

*When evil darkens our world, give us light. When despair numbs our souls, give us hope. When we stumble and fall, lift us up. When doubts assail us, give us faith. When nothing seems sure, give us trust. When ideals fade, give us vision. When we lose our way, be our guide! That we may find serenity in your presence, and purpose in doing your will. Amen.*

**John D. Rayner**

**Student 1:** Community of Faith

Lord, as we remember our CSW Tree planted a year ago, we thank you for helping us all get safely through the past year with all the stress of the COVID-19 Pandemic. We believe as a school community that you care and love us all. We promise to do our best to be Faith filled people always. May you bless us and our families at home.

We pray this in Jesus's Holy Name. Amen.

The Faith symbol is put on the tree (or substitute tree).

**Student 2:** Community of Learning

Lord, you have blessed us all with intelligence, imagination and memory. As we grow up we learn at home and school all about the wonders of your creation and how to live successfully in our human community. As a school community help us share knowledge and experience and through learning may we become educated, caring, grown up people, caring for our world with all its creatures and resources. We pray this in Jesus's Holy Name. Amen.

The Learning Symbol is put on the tree.

**Student 3:** Community of Love

Lord, we are all made in your image and likeness. You are a community of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We were created to be a community, giving and receiving love. As a school community help us all to seek to love one another. Help us not to be self-seeking or self-centred. May we accept all our fellow students and teachers and treat each person with the love and care they deserve. We pray this in Jesus's Holy Name. Amen.

The Love Symbol is put on the tree.

**Student 4:** Community of Resilience.

Lord, resilience means being strong and refusing to give up or give in no matter what we experience in life. Jesus was strong when people criticised Him unfairly and He continued always to do the will of His Heavenly Father. He showed incredible resilience when he faced His Passion and Death. Help us be resilient as we face our future together. Keep us from giving into temptations and depression. May we draw strength from Jesus, our true Master and Teacher. Help us to give courage and energy to one another always. We pray this in Jesus's Holy Name. Amen.

The Resilience Symbol is put on the tree.

**Student 5:** Community of Hope

Lord, hope is so important for us all. We all need to have reason to live well and to keep us going through good times as well as difficult times. You are our Shepherd who seeks to protect his flock always and who looks out for those who stray. On Easter Day your Apostles had lost hope because you had been put to death. Yet You rose up from the grave and appeared to Mary and to the Apostles showing them you had overcome death and evil. As Risen Lord, you have given each of us the amazing gift of living forever in your sacred presence. May our school be a place of such hope always. Help us to give hope and encouragement to one another always. We pray this in Jesus's Holy Name Amen

The Hope Symbol is put on the tree.

**Leader:** Lord, we as a school community pledge ourselves to living as a community of Faith, Learning, Love, Resilience and Hope. Fill us with energy and strength to work together to bring this about. Bless our Students, Staff and Families. May Mary, Mother of Jesus, be there for us as she always was for Him.

**Together we pray:** *Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is with you...*

We finish our prayer by invoking the Holy Trinity.

**Together we pray:** *Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

**+ In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. + Amen.**