

Secondary Daily Class Reflections for Our Catholic Schools' Week [9 – 13 October 2017]

These reflections are based on the life and work of noteworthy Catholics who contributed to the education of others during their life. In each case, there is a short biography, a reflection, a prayer to share with your class and a 'daily action' to help put faith into action for that day. Pictures of each person could be displayed on the whiteboard during the reflection or on the wall for the day. You have a choice of six lives for five days. Edward the Confessors' feast day is on Friday 13 October, the day of the Schools' Mass.

MARY WARD [1585 – 1645]



Mary Ward was an English Catholic Religious Sister whose activities led to the founding of the Congregation of Jesus and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, better known as the Sisters of Loreto which have established schools around the world. She was born in Mulwith, North Yorkshire at a time of great conflict for Roman Catholics in England. Two of her relatives were involved in the Gunpowder Plot. It was there at the age of 15 that Mary felt called to religious life. She entered a monastery of Poor Clares at Saint-Omer in northern France. However, Mary Ward did not find herself called to the contemplative life and instead decided to dedicate herself to an active ministry, whilst still being religious; this was considered most unusual at the time. At the age of 24 she found herself surrounded by a band of devoted companions determined to work under her guidance. In 1609, they established themselves as a religious community at Saint-Omer and opened schools for girls. Mary was declared Venerable by Pope Benedict XVI on 19 December 2009; this is the first of three steps on the path to being declared a saint.

Reflection

Mary was a woman of action. She could not sit back and allow events to pass her by. She took the lead and made things happen. Sometimes at home/school challenges can look too big and we don't really know where to start. Perhaps a few small steps will be enough to make a difference?

Prayer

Lord, God of Peace,
open our spirits and our hearts still more
to all our brothers and sisters,
who are in need of love,
so that, more and more,
we may become bearers of hope and peace.
Amen

Daily Action

Today, try to be more open to forgive others for thoughtless comments that might offend you.

VENERABLE BEDE [672 – 735]



Saint Bede, also known as the Venerable Bede was an English monk at the monastery of St Peter and its companion monastery of St Paul in the Kingdom of Northumbria, England. He is well known as an author and scholar. His most famous work *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* gained him the title "The Father of English History". Bede was a skilled linguist and translator, and his work made the Latin and Greek writings of the early Church Fathers much more accessible to his fellow Anglo-Saxons, which contributed significantly to English Christianity. In 1899, Pope Leo XIII declared him a Doctor of the Church; he is the only native of

Great Britain to achieve this designation.

Reflection

Saint Bede was a man of considerable intellect and vision who had a great impact on the world through his writings and his wisdom. We all have wisdom and we all have gifts and we can all do good things for others. You don't have to be famous for that – you can make a difference today.

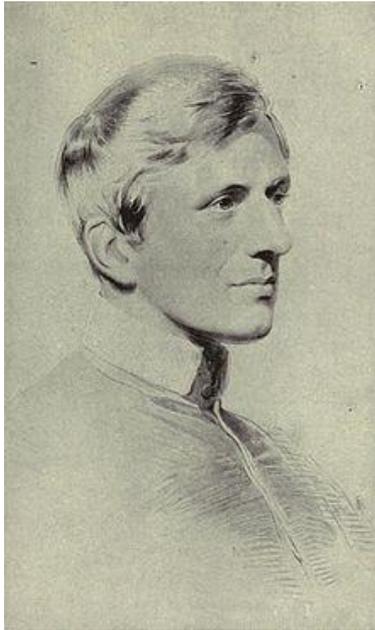
Prayer

Lord, be at the beginning and end
of all that we do and say today.
Help us in our work and study
to do the best we can
and to explore the generous gifts you have given to us.
Amen.

Daily Action

Today, try to take a little extra care with a subject that you may find a challenge.

John Henry Newman [1801 – 1890]



John Henry Newman was an Anglican priest, poet and theologian and later a Catholic cardinal, who was an important figure in the religious history of England in the 19th century. In 1845 Newman left the Church of England and his teaching post at Oxford University and was received into the Catholic Church. He was quickly ordained as a priest and continued as an influential religious leader, based in Birmingham. In 1879, he was created Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII in recognition of his services to the cause of the Catholic Church in England. He was instrumental in the founding of the Catholic University College Dublin and the establishment of Birmingham Oratory, a school for the education of young men. Newman's beatification was officially proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI on 19 September 2010 during his visit to the United Kingdom.

Reflection

Newman struggled with his faith for many years and was rejected by many. His belief that God had a purpose for his life is reflected in the extraordinary amount that he achieved as a philosopher, theologian and educator. We also struggle with life but God does have a purpose for each one of us.

Prayer

Oh Lord, support us all the day long,
until the shadows lengthen,
and the evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over,
and our work is done.
Then in your mercy,
grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest,
and peace at the last.
Amen.

Daily Action

Today, try and find a few moments for quiet reflection and to honestly examine your own actions in relation to others.

CORNELIA CONNELLY [1809 – 1879]



Cornelia Connelly was the American-born foundress of the society of the Holy Child Jesus, a Roman Catholic religious institute. In 1846, she founded the first of many Holy Child schools, in England. Cornelia was born in Philadelphia and raised as a Presbyterian. She married the Reverend Pierce Connelly, an Episcopal Priest. By all accounts they were an immensely happy couple, loved and welcomed by their parishioners. In early 1840 her husband Pierce informed her that he was certain of his vocation to become a priest in the Catholic Church. Cornelia was aware that this would mean their separation for life and a break up of the family. She urged him to consider his wish deeply but he insisted on taking Holy Orders. She was invited to England to educate Catholic girls and the poor. With the help of Pierce, who also came to England as Chaplain to Lord

Shrewsbury, she drew up a set of rules for a new religious congregation, which she called the Society of the Holy Child Jesus. In December 1847, she took her perpetual vows as a nun and was formally installed as Superior General of the Society. Cornelia died on 18 April 1879, at St Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex, where she had established a school. In 1992, the Catholic Church proclaimed Cornelia as Venerable.

Reflection

Cornelia's plan for her life was turned on its head by circumstances beyond her control. She never gave up looking for God's purpose in her life and worked tirelessly to do his will. Sometimes our lives take an unexpected or difficult turn and we need to summon great courage to do God's will for us.

Prayer

Almighty and eternal God,
you have created me to know you,
to love you and to serve you.
Help me to see what leads to you
and to recognise what separates me from you,
so that I may choose only things that help others
and serve you.
Amen.

Daily Action

Today, try in some small way to help someone who you know is suffering or unhappy.

THOMAS AQUINAS [1225 – 1274]



Saint Thomas Aquinas was an Italian Dominican Friar, Catholic Priest, and Doctor of the Church. He was an immensely influential philosopher and theologian. His impact on Western thought was and is considerable, and much of modern philosophy developed or opposed his ideas, particularly in the areas of ethics, natural law, metaphysics and political theory. The work for which he is best known is the *Summa Theologiae*. The Catholic Church honours Thomas Aquinas as a saint, a model teacher and considers him one of the Church's greatest theologians and philosophers. Canonised in 1323,

Thomas was later proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by Pope St. Pius V in 1567.

Reflection

Teaching is a calling that requires a lot of dedication and hard work. Our teachers make a huge contribution to our lives. In a sense, as well as learners, we are all teachers. What you say and the things that you do 'teach' and influence others. Your friends and younger students learn from you! What do you teach them?

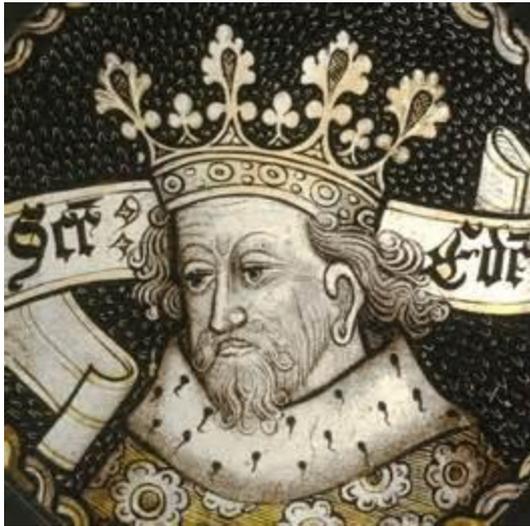
Prayer

O Lord my God
give me understanding to know you,
zeal to seek you,
wisdom to find you,
a life that is pleasing to you,
unshakeable perseverance,
and the hope that I will one day meet you
face to face.
Amen.

Daily Action

Today, try and show appreciation for your teachers through small acts of kindness and consideration.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR [1003 – 1066]



Edward the Confessor also known as Saint Edward the Confessor, was among the last Anglo-Saxon kings of England, ruling for 24 years from 1042 to 1066. The traditional image of him is as an unworldly and pious man who was a devout and faithful Christian. 'Confessor' reflects his reputation as a saint who did not suffer martyrdom but lived a life of dedicated service to God. Edward is seen by many to have been an energetic, successful king, whose reign was a time of peace and prosperity in England. Edward was the builder of Westminster Abbey, finished in 1065. His death in 1066 triggered profound changes for the people of England. About a

century later in 1161, Pope Alexander III canonised the late king. Edward's feast day is 13 October.

Reflection

Being a leader is not always easy. Saint Edward was a pious man who wanted to do what is right, yet he faced all the pressures of kingship and did not always get things right. Sometimes we are called to lead, perhaps amongst friends or in school. It takes thoughtfulness and courage to lead others and perhaps, a few moments of prayer asking God to give us wisdom and guidance.

Prayer

Lord, give me the courage to change things that I can,
give me the serenity to accept things that I cannot change,
and the wisdom to know the difference.
Amen.

Daily Action

Today, try to be aware of moments when your word or actions influence others. Do your best to make those moments positive.