

Greetings from Bishop Michael for Catholic Schools Week 2026

"Would you like to be a saint?" A girl at the back of the class was the first to respond: "I am struggling with this idea," she said. "I do think it is for me." Another hand went up: "Oh no, definitely no ... I could never be a saint!" "It would be no fun!", said another. From the left of the room, John joined the conversation: "If I was to be a saint, I would have to stop doing many things I enjoy." It was obvious that most of the group could imagine sainthood only with great difficulty. In fact, a good number of them had very little desire to tread the road toward such a calling.

Changing the line of questioning, I asked: "Well, do you desire to be the best that you can be in life?" Anna was the first to answer: "Sure, we all desire to be the best that we can be in life." "Well, that gives us far more hope of achieving something worthwhile," said John. It seemed that every one of my students wished to be the best that they could be. While very few wished to be saints. It took considerable time to explain that "to be the best that you can be" and "to be a saint" might be much closer than they thought. For a saint is someone who, with God's help, has grown into the fullest and finest version of who they were created to be.

Each year, Catholic Schools Week offers us an opportunity to celebrate and reflect upon the gift that is Catholic Education. The theme of Catholic Schools Week 2026 is: "Normal Lives, Called to Holiness". It reminds us that it is through the daily flow of life, with its joys and its trials, that we grow in holiness. That, with God's help, we become the best that we can be.

Catholic Schools Week also gives us the opportunity to thank our Boards of Management, principals, teachers, school staff, pupils, parents, parents' associations, priests, the members of our Diocesan Education Secretariats, and all who serve in the noble vocation of Catholic Education throughout our sister dioceses.

Let me end with a quote from the young Italian teenager, Carlo Acutis (1991–2006), who was recently declared a saint: "All people are born as originals but many die as photocopies." I pray that our Catholic school communities will continue to inspire us all to foster our God-given originality and, in the process, teach us how to walk the journey of life striving always to be the very best we can be. Striving, with God's help, to grow in holiness. Striving to be saints.

+ Michael Duignan
Bishop of Galway and Kilmacduagh
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Bishop of Clonfert



Beannachtaí ó Easpag Mícheál do Sheachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2026

“Ar mhaith leat a bheith i do naomh?” Ba chailín ag cúl an tseomra a d’fhreagair an cheist ar dtús: “Tá mé ag streachailt leis an smaoineamh sin”, a deir sí. “Ní cheapaim go mbaineann sé liom.” D’ardaigh lámh eile: “Seo anois, ní cheapaim ... gur féidir liomsa a bheith i mo naomh ariamh!” “Ní bheadh aon spraoi agam!”, a deir duine eile. Ar an taobh clé den seomra bhí John, agus cur sé a thuairim leis an gcomhrá: “Dá mbeadh mise ina naomh, bheadh orm stop a chur le go leor rudaí a thaitníonn liom a dhéanamh.” Bhí sé an-soiléir nach raibh formhór an ghrúpa in ann iad féin a shamhlú mar naomh. Mar a tharlaíonn sé, ní raibh mórán suime ag líon mór acu bóthar na naofachta a shiúil.

D’iarr mé, agus mé ag athrú treo na gceisteanna: “Bhuel, ar mhaith leat an leagan is fearr dhuit féin a bhaint amach sa saol?” Ba í Anna an chéad duine a d’fhreagair: “Cinnté, tá muid ar fad ag iarraidh an leagan is fearr dúinn féin a bhaint amach sa saol.” “Bhuel, tá an smaoineamh sin i bhfad níos fearr, ar a laghad tá seans ann go bhféadfadh muid é sin a bhaint amach”, a deir John. Is cosúil go raibh gach aon cheann de mo dhaltaí ag iarraidh an leagan is fearr dóibh féin a bhaint amach. Cé nach raibh duine ar bith acu ag iarraidh naofacht a bhaint amach. Thóg sé i bhfad orm a mhíniú dóibh nach raibh mórán difríocht idir “an leagan is fearr duit féin a bhaint amach” agus “an naofacht a bhaint amach”. Mar, is ionann naomh agus duine, le cúnamh Dé, a bhain amach an leagan is fearr dóibh féin.

Gach aon bhliain, tugann Seachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha deis dúinn ceiliúradh agus machnamh a dhéanamh ar an mbronntanas atá san Oideachas Caitliceach. Is é téama do Sheachtain na Scoileanna Caitliceacha 2026: “An Gnáthshaol, Glaoite Chun na Naofachta”. Meabhraíonn sé dúinn gur is sa saol laethúil a mhaireachtáil mar aon le haghaidh a thabhairt ar chora an tsaoil a éiríonn muid naofa. Is le cúnamh Dé, a bhaineann muid amach an leagan is fearr dúinn féin.

Anuas ar sin, tugann sé deis dúinn ár mbuíochas a ghabháil lenár mbord bainistíochta, ár bpríomhoidí, ár múinteoirí, ár bhfoirne scoile, ár ndaltaí, ár dtuismitheoirí, ár gcumainn tuismitheoirí, ár sagairt, na baill d’ár Rúnaíocht Oideachais na Deoise agus iad siúd ar fad a ghlacann páirt sa ghairm uasal arb é Oideachas Caitliceach ar fud ár gcomhdheoisí.

Lig dom críochnú le focail ó dhéagóir óg ón Iodáil, Carlos Acutis (1991-2006) a ainmníodh mar naomh le deanaí: “Tagann gach duine ar an saol mar bhunchóip ach go minic faigheann daoine bás mar fhótachóipeanna”. Guím go leanfaidh ár bpobal scoileanna Caitliceacha ag spreagadh muid ar fad chun ár n-úrnuacht féin a tháinig ó Dhia a chothú, agus sa phróiseas, ag múineadh dúinn conas an bóthar sa saol a shiúil, ag déanamh ár ndícheall i gcónaí an leagan is fearr dúinn féin a bhaint amach. Ag déanamh ár ndícheall, le cúnamh Dé, fás sa naofacht. Ag déanamh ár ndícheall a bheith ina naoimh.

+ Mícheál Ó Duibhgeannáin
Easpag Chluain Fearta
Easpag na Gaillimhe agus Chill Mhic Dhuach
Riarthóir Aspalda Chill Fhionnúrach

