

**Assistant Priests:** Fr. Damian Esene, Fr Simon Peter Lubuulwa

**Deacon:** Rev. Ian Black

**Parish Office hours:** 10am – 12 noon Tuesday and Friday (email or telephone only)

**Catholic Schools**

St Francis Primary School: Queen's Road, Maidstone, ME16 0LB

01622 771540

St Simon Stock Secondary School: Oakwood Park, Maidstone, ME16 0JP

01622 754551

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**A MESSAGE DELIVERED ON 12<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, EDUCATION SUNDAY FROM  
BISHOP MARCUS STACK**

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Over the last eighteen months we have seen an upheaval affecting everyone in our society, the like of which has not been witnessed since the end of the Second World War. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed not only aspects of how we live our lives but has given us a chance to reflect on the fragility and preciousness of human life, on human solidarity, and the capacity to show love and support to our neighbours.

Like many other front-line workers, teachers, school leaders, and support staff have exemplified this love throughout the pandemic, going above and beyond to support the young people in their care. It is only right therefore that on Education Sunday, we take this opportunity to offer prayers of thanksgiving for all who work in our Catholic schools and colleges, and to express our gratitude for their outstanding dedication and professionalism, especially during the pandemic.

Throughout the challenges they have faced in two national lockdowns, two sets of exam cohorts, and a managed return to schooling, the staff of all our schools have exemplified what it means to follow the command of Our Lord Jesus Christ to love our neighbour. On behalf of the Catholic Education Service, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to them and my appreciation for the vocation and mission they exercise in the community of the Church.