

## INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME 2019

### *FORM AND FLOURISH – TO RE-FORM*

Education is often thought of as formation. A Christian view of education sees it as a life-long process, for the whole person, so that, formed in the image of God, we may take up Jesus' offer to us to flourish and live life in all its fullness.

As we are educated, we discover who we are, our unique gifts and skills, and our role within our community, our country, and our world. Education does, however, present challenges for all of us, in different ways. Throughout all levels of education there is a very real concern about the mental health and wellbeing of both learners and teachers. Recent figures from the Children's Society suggest that 1 in 10 young people between the ages of 5 and 16 have a diagnosable mental health condition, and many more have times when they find life difficult and stressful.

Social disadvantage and physical disability can also present barriers to learning and development, and as life in school, college and university moves at such a fast pace it is easy for students to feel as though they have been left behind or have failed.

The Japanese art of Kintsugi, or "golden joining" has become well-known more recently in the West.. Broken pottery is repaired using lacquer mixed with powdered gold, making the object unique and even more precious. It is helpful to remember that our formation is not always a straightforward, linear process. God formed us in the first place and we are reminded of this elemental truth in the reading from Psalm 139. In being formed, we must also be open to being re-formed, like the spoiled vessel in the reading from Jeremiah.

Just as broken pottery can be re-formed, by God's grace, we too have opportunities for second chances and new starts. God doesn't give up on us. Our churches have a critical role in presenting and living the Gospel in ways that demonstrate the reality of that as found in Jesus Christ.

Education Sunday offers us an opportunity to celebrate all that is good in education, to give thanks for teachers and learners, educational leaders and support staff; to rejoice with those who succeed and provide reassurance for those who struggle.

This Education Sunday we pray that, through God's power, all those who study or work in schools, colleges or universities, may flourish and be open to knowing God's love as they are formed and re-formed.

*in Christ  
+ Justin*

**The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby  
Archbishop of Canterbury**

