

- 1 Two years running, Tom Hanks received the Oscar for "Best Actor" - in 1993 for his role in "*Philadelphia*", and in 1994 for "*Forrest Gump*". A line that he repeats as Forrest Gump is to say that "*life is like a box of chocolates.*"
- 2 I can focus on "Quality Street" chocolates as I think of my own character.
- 3 The **green triangle** of chocolate. On the seashore we never see pebbles of this shape because, of course, any sharp edges are knocked off by others in the sea. Do I have any sharp edges to my character - do I get at people, annoy them? Do I make fun of others? Yet still there is good in the person that this might represent. This is good solid chocolate, but I need to knock off some of my sharp edges.
- 4 Those edges - the negative things - tend to be knocked off when I really share my life with others, as we see in the **round toffee cup**. I become more WHOLE as a person, more rounded in character, keeping life in balance, living life peacefully one day at a time.
- 5 **Fudge** - the paper comes off quietly, so this is the one to take if you're trying to sneak an extra one out of the box when no-one's looking! As there is a lot of sugar in fudge, so this individual has great richness within - a lot to offer others. People are the richer for having been with this person - the one who always smiles and forgives; the person who often speaks a word of encouragement and support; the one who is generous in doing something they'd rather not do. These people will make the world a better place for having walked in it.
- 6 Maybe I am a little like this one - the **purple hazelnut in caramel** - a little showy, flashy on the outside. I have *two* wrappings - maybe to protect or hide my real self. Maybe I don't want anyone to know what I am really like deep inside - because, deep within... here is a nut!
- 7 The **green coconut**. 10 minutes after eating this, you find little bits of coconut between your teeth - something more to chew over. Maybe I am like this coconut - a challenging person because I leave things for others to think about, to "chew over". These people leave a little of themselves wherever they go: that compliment that really encourages someone; passing the joy of a contagious smile to another.
- 8 **Strawberry**. I might appear quite firm on the outside, perhaps giving the impression that I'm a little difficult to know at first, maybe rather shy. Inside there's something very special: a quiet person who gets on with life peacefully; a gentle character, happy with who I am; a person who quietly brings support and healing to those who are hurt; one who shows others how special they are.
- 9 **Orange**. This melts in your mouth if you let it, *but* some people find dark chocolate a little sickly, too. But why am I saying "BUT"? If I set out to look for negative things in others, I will find them. If I "LOOK" for the good - the quality - in other people, then I will come to see so much good around me. That "WAY OF LOOKING" (which should mark out a Christian school) - that "way of seeing" - will affect my whole life. Setting out each morning to look for the good in others will bring peace in my heart and a smile on my face throughout the day!
- 10 The **brown caramel**. This is the one you find in your pocket a week after putting it there! It's been squashed a bit, but it

doesn't go "gooey" in the pocket. It is firm: a solid character, faithful, trusting, accepting others for who they are, a true friend through good times and bad. It's a great compliment to be told that you are a friend on whom others can rely.

11 Maybe I am one of these **yellow caramels** - normally left to the last in our house. Do I sometimes feel a bit left out of things, feel that I'm not as popular as others? The last one to be chosen for something? And yet Jesus said that the way of **his** Kingdom is that "*the first will be last*"; that the 'insignificant ones' are the important ones - the sparrows, the sinner, the lost coin, and Zacchaeus (the tax-collector whom people thought little but who was great, and walked tall in God's eyes). And even if I don't think too much of myself, there is One who tells me that he "*has written my name on the palm of his hands*", as though I am the only one that exists.

12 Quality Street are all *different*: they would not be Quality Street if they were all the same. And when I come to meet the Maker of all this QUALITY, he will *not* ask me: "Why weren't you Mother Teresa?" He *will* be asking me if I have grown as the person he called me to be. In Christian schools we are not called to try to make people into something that they are not, but to invite people to be and to grow as who they already are.

13 Let us *be* people of quality! Let us do the ordinary things of life in an extraordinary way! We hope to see a street-cleaner collecting rubbish in the same committed way that Shakespeare wrote poetry! Let us make extraordinary use of our ordinary talents, because we are all called to be FULLY ALIVE, to be saints of God.

14 And so we thank you, Lord,
for making us people of quality.
We pray that we may use our gifts well
and not keep them unused,
unwrapped,
because a gift is no good
unless it is shared.
We thank you
that we are people of quality
whom your hands have made.
May you be blessed forever!

This is an excerpt from the page of this date in
'Praying Each Day of the Year',
a 3-volume book
by Nicholas Hutchinson, FSC.

For details:

<http://www.matthew-james.co.uk/>

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to research this topic further.

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the prayer and education website
of the De La Salle Brothers
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