Let us pray:

Lord our God, 
may I learn 
to treat others generously, 
with respect, 
and with care and understanding, 
that we may all 
bring out the best in one another.
Amen.

(See also 10 June.)

1 One of England’s greatest authors, Charles Dickens, died on this day in 1870.

2 He had started school at the age of 9 but had to leave when his father was imprisoned for debt. Charles Dickens was then aged 12 and he had to get a job to support himself. He found work in a shoe-polish factory, but felt humiliated and not in control of his own life. This experience would haunt him for the rest of his life. Later he would write a book called ‘David Copperfield’, which reflected his own difficult experiences as a child.

3 Dickens used some of his novels to point out that many people suffered greatly at that time in Victorian England. These stories were a good way of encouraging people to look at how they might help make their part of the world a better place.

4 His stories were printed as a serial in a London newspaper. Dickens was in great demand as a public reader of his novels, which he tended to act out as he spoke.

5 Charles Dickens died in 1870. Queen Victoria wrote of him in her diary: “He is a very great loss. He had a large loving mind, and the strongest sympathy with the poor.” He was buried in Westminster Abbey beside the graves of the nation’s kings and queens and other famous people.

6 We can reflect on some words written by Charles Dickens:

“Some great people make others feel small, but the real great people are those who make others feel great.”

7 Let’s pause in silence to think just how I might help someone today to “feel great” about themselves.

(pause…)