

Our Catholic Schools

2006-07

A Discussion On
Ontario's Catholic Schools
And their Future

Opening and Closing Prayers



Institute for Catholic Education

OPENING PRAYER SERVICE

INVITATION TO PRAYER

Leader: As God's holy people we recall the promise that wherever two or three of us are gathered in God's name that our God is present among us. Remembering this Presence let us begin our prayer as we should begin all that we do – In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

GATHERING SONG

Two Suggestions Follow:

Gather Us In (CBW 111 587) (verses 1, 2 & 4)

Verse 1: Here in this place, new light is streaming, Now is the darkness vanished away, See, in this space, our fears and our dreamings, Brought here to you in the light of this day.

Chorus: Gather us in, the lost and forsaken, Gather us in, the blind and the lame; Call to us now, and we shall awaken, We shall arise at the sound of our name.

Verse 2: We are the young, our lives are a mystery; We are the old, who yearn for your face; We have been sung through-out all of hist'ry, Called to be light to the whole human race.

Chorus: Gather us in, the rich and the haughty, Gather us in, the proud and the strong; Give us a heart so meek and so lowly, Give us the courage to enter the song.

Verse 4: Not in the dark of buildings confining, Not in some heaven, light years away, But here in this place, the new light is shining, Now is the kingdom, now is the day.

Chorus: Gather us in, and hold us for ever, Gather us in, and make us your own; Gather us in, all people together, Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

One Bread, One Body (GP 127) (verses 2 & 3)

Chorus: One bread, one body, one Lord of all, one cup of blessing which we bless. And we, though many, through-out the earth, we are one body in this one Lord.

Verse 2: Many the gifts, many the works, one in the Lord of all.

Verse 3: Grain for the fields, scattered and grown, gathered to one, for all.

A PROFESSION OF BELIEF

Together: WE BELIEVE THAT

- ❖ God calls us to be God's holy people in the world
- ❖ God's Spirit resides among us in community
- ❖ Community is at the heart of all education
- ❖ A faith community is the privileged residence of God's Spirit and the focus of all faith learning
- ❖ We are privileged to be called by God to create the faith community for Catholic Education

OPENING PRAYER

Leader: God, in the waters of Baptism, you have bonded us to yourself and to one another as your people. You have called us to be your Good News in the world. Release afresh within us the life of your Spirit and keep us faithful branches of the Vine Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. Amen

SCRIPTURE READING – 1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 28

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose. One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom given him by the Spirit; another may have the gift of preaching instruction given him by the same Spirit; and another the gift of faith given by the same Spirit; another again the gift of healing, through this one Spirit; one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy; another the gift of recognizing Spirits; another the gift of tongues and another the ability to interpret them. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptized, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. If the foot were to say, "I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body", would that mean that it stopped being part of the body? If the ear were to say, "I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body", would that mean that it was not a part of the body? If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you", nor can the head say to the feet, "I do not need you".

God has arranged the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, and so that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be equally concerned for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

Now you together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it.

PRAYERS FROM GOD'S PEOPLE

Response - Lord, release your Spirit among us

For all **parents**, that they may always grow in appreciation of their call to be the primary educators of their children especially in handing on the faith, we pray

For our **Bishops**, that as the chief teachers in our diocese, they will call all of us to ever greater witness to Jesus who is our Good News and our salvation, we pray

For our elected **trustees**, that they may be gifted by God with wise and discerning hearts as they respond to the many challenges in Catholic Education, we pray

For our **administrators, teachers and all professional educators**, that they may be deeply rooted in and draw hope from the Teacher from Nazareth, we pray

For our **students**, may they always be open to the Spirit alive within them and generously use their talents and gifts for the good of all, we pray

Other prayers may be added by those present

Leader: Let us gather all our prayers into one as we pray our family prayer
OUR FATHER

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Leader : God of all unity, all things work together for good for those who believe into You. Draw us closer to one another that we may be a source of strength for each other. Keep us faithful to the work of Catholic Education and to the proclamation of your Son Jesus Christ who is Lord forever and ever. AMEN

CLOSING SONG

Two Suggestions Follow:

City of God (CBW 111 345) (verses 1 & 2)

Chorus: Let us build the City of God.
May our tears be turned into dancing!
For the Lord, our light and our love,
Has turned the night into day!

Verse 1: Awake from your slumber! Arise from your sleep! A new day is dawning for all those who weep. The people in darkness have seen a great light. The Lord of our longing has conquered the night.

Verse 2: We are sons of the morning; we are daughters of day. The one who has loved us has brightened our way. The Lord of all kindness has called us to be light for all people to set their hearts free.

Here I Am Lord (CBW111 520) (verses 1 & 2)

Chorus: Here I am Lord. It is I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

Verse 1: I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry. All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save. I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Verse 2: I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain. I have wept for love of them: they turn away. I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?

CLOSING PRAYER

A LITANY FOR THOSE WHO WALK*

Response: God of guidance, show us your way

“For you who walk, there is no road; the path is made by walking.” In these challenging times, as we seek new ways not only to be bearers of the “Good News” but to BE the Good News”....(Antonio Machado)

As we gather at this important re-defining moment in Catholic education where we are challenged to name, claim and proclaim who we are ...

As we seek your divine wisdom in our leadership and grace in our actions ...

As we re-ignite the fire of our faith and our passion for Catholicity ...

As we continue the “conversation behind the wall” with energy, courage and hope ...

As we build a community in which gospel values are lived and loved ...

As we take new steps in proclaiming your goodness through our work ...

Spirit of God, you are stirring in our hearts. You urge us to move forward in new ways. You prompt us to follow. You encourage us not to give up. You call us to open our minds and our hearts to receive your energizing transforming radiance. Make us receptive so that we will follow your loving movement within our lives. We trust in your powerful presence within us. Amen. (From the Book: May I Have This Dance, by Joyce Rupp)

* *Taken from Putting Feet on the Gospel: Discussing and Living the Spirit of Catholicity on School community Councils: a workshop for Catholic School Community Councils of the Simcoe Muskoka CDSB, Facilitated by Suzanne Musters.*