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June 18, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairpersons & Directors of Education
Religious Education & Adult Faith Consultants
- All Catholic District School Boards

FROM: Brian O'Sullivan, Director of Catholic Education

SUBJECT: **Catholic Education: *Living as Joyful Disciples***
L'éducation catholique: *Vivre en disciples joyeux*
MAY 5 – MAY 10, 2019



“Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.” (1 Peter 1:8)

«Lui, vous l'aimez sans l'avoir vu; en lui, sans le voir encore, vous mettez votre foi, vous exultez d'une joie inexprimable et remplie de gloire.» (1 Pierre 1, 8)

It is a pleasure to announce the theme for Catholic Education Week 2019:

Catholic Education: *Living as Joyful Disciples*
L'éducation catholique: *Vivre en disciples joyeux*

Catholic Education Week is held each year in May in our 29 Ontario Catholic school boards. CEW 2019 is scheduled to take place during the week of May 5 – May 10, 2019.

The theme for CEW 2019 was inspired by three sources:

- *Renewing the Promise*, The Pastoral Letter on Catholic Education from the Bishops of Ontario
- *Gaudete et exultate*, The Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis on the Call to Holiness¹
- *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, The Synod of Bishops in October 2018²

¹ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exultate.html

² <http://www.synod2018.va/content/synod2018/en.html>; <http://www.ocytoronto.org/synod/>

Mindful of the upcoming Synod on Youth, the theme and sub-themes are very much directed to the young people in our schools, especially in their growth in holiness and their formation as disciples of Christ through the discernment of their vocational pathways.

In the section of *Renewing the Promise* entitled, “A Community that Forms Joyful Disciples,” we read: “*Our Catholic schools help to form joyful disciples as hearts and minds are opened to the transforming love of God and to the flame of faith in action. On a daily basis, Catholic schools demonstrate the joy of believing and witness the Good News to the communities that they serve.*”

SUB-THEMES

There are five sub-themes for Catholic Education Week 2019. Please see below for the sub-themes, as well as the extended explanation of each.

The sub-themes for CEW 2019 are:

Monday:	Rooted in Prayer Enracinés dans la prière
Tuesday:	Living in Community Vivre au coeur de la communauté
Wednesday:	Doing Justice and Creating Hope Semer la justice et inspirer l'espérance
Thursday:	Journeying Together in Faith Cheminer ensemble dans la foi
Friday:	Sharing the Good News Partager la bonne nouvelle

Monday: Rooted in Prayer / Enracinés dans la prière

“So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours.” (Mark 11:24)

«C’est pourquoi, je vous le dis: tout ce que vous demandez dans la prière, croyez que vous l’avez obtenu, et cela vous sera accordé.» (Marc 11, 24)

The first sub-theme is a reminder of our foundation as Catholic learning communities in our relationship with God through prayer and liturgy. In his letter on the Call to Holiness, Pope Francis lists five signs of holiness in today’s world, the fifth of which is constant prayer: “*Finally, though it may seem obvious, we should remember that holiness consists in a habitual openness to the transcendent, expressed in prayer and adoration.*” The concluding section of the Pastoral Letter on “The Breaking of the Bread” reminds us how, “*As Jesus accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus, it was at that moment of the breaking of the bread, that their eyes were opened and they realized that their hearts were burning within them.*”

Tuesday: Living in Community / Vivre au coeur de la communauté

“...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members, one of another.” (Romans 12:5)

«...de même, nous qui sommes plusieurs, nous sommes un seul corps dans le Christ, et membres les uns des autres, chacun pour sa part.» (Romains 12, 5)

Community is another sign of holiness in today’s world, according to Pope Francis: *“A community that cherishes the little details of love, whose members care for one another and create an open and evangelizing environment, is a place where the risen Lord is present, sanctifying it in accordance with the Father’s plan.”* *Renewing the Promise* recapitulates the experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus within the framework of four sections, all beginning with the words, “A Community.” The second section, in particular, “A Community that Builds Relationships” tells us that, *“The work of Catholic schools involves initiating, facilitating and maintaining relationships within and among the Catholic educational partners.”*

Wednesday: Doing Justice and Creating Hope / Semer la justice et inspirer l’espérance

“But as for you, return to your God, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God.” (Hosea 12:6)

«Toi, reviens à ton Dieu: garde la fidélité et le droit, et mets ton espoir en ton Dieu, toujours.» (Osée 12, 7)

The second chapter of *Gaudete et Exsultate* uses the Beatitudes as a blueprint for holiness. Pope Francis reflects on the beatitude that calls the merciful blessed. Holiness, then, is not about swooning in mystic rapture. As Saint John Paul II said, *“If we truly start out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified.”* In the section from the Pastoral Letter entitled “A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope, we read, *“The Christ-centred mission of each school, by its very nature, contains a call to service in the greater community. Catholic schools form disciples with a social conscience who put their faith into action.”*

Thursday: Journeying Together in Faith / Cheminer ensemble dans la foi

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” (Colossians 2:6-7)

«Menez donc votre vie dans le Christ Jésus, la Seigneur, tel que vous l’avez reçu. Soyez enracinés, édifiés en lui, restez fermes dans la foi, comme on vous l’a enseigné; soyez débordants d’action de grâce.» (Colossiens 2, 6-7)

The Apostolic Exhortation reminds us that “Growth in holiness is a journey in community, side by side with others.” The section of *Renewing the Promise* entitled, “A Community that Accompanies” says, *“While walking with the disciples on the road, Jesus is able to share the story of our faith with them. Hearing the truth was a transformational experience... This is what Pope Francis means*

when he speaks about the art of accompaniment. It is about taking the time to walk alongside one another, to listen and to teach, and in so doing, to transform. Our Catholic schools do this on a daily basis as they model the Emmaus experience. Staff practice the art of accompaniment by helping students realize that their own unique story is given greater meaning and purpose in knowing and living the story we share in Christ.”

Friday: Sharing the Good News / Partager la bonne nouvelle

“Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.” (Luke 24:35)

«À leur tour, ils racontaient ce qui s’était passé sur la route, et comment le Seigneur s’était fait reconnaître par eux à la fraction du pain.» (Luc 24, 35)

We know from the Emmaus story, that it was that transformation encounter with the Risen Jesus, that caused the disciples to return to Jerusalem to share the news of their experience with the rest of the earliest Christian community. Pope Francis, in his list of signs of holiness in the world, includes boldness, enthusiasm, the freedom to speak out, apostolic fervour; all these are included in the word *parrhesia*. It is boldness, an impulse to evangelize and to leave a mark in this world. To allow us to do this, Jesus himself comes and tells us once more, serenely yet firmly, “Do not be afraid” (Mark 6:50). “I am with you always, to the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). These words enable us to go forth and serve with the same courage that the Holy Spirit stirred up in the Apostles, impelling them to proclaim Jesus Christ.

Pope Francis, in addressing a group of young people during a preparatory session for the Synod on Youth, called them to *parrhesia* and to joyful discipleship with this invitation:

“Dear young people, the heart of the Church is young precisely because the Gospel is like a lifeblood that continuously regenerates it. It is up to us to be obedient and to cooperate in this fruitfulness. And all of you can collaborate in this fruitfulness, whether you are Catholic Christians, or of other religions, or non-believers. We ask you to collaborate in our fruitfulness, to give life. We do this in this Synodal journey too, thinking of the situation of young people all over the world. We need to regain the enthusiasm of faith and the taste for searching. We need to rediscover in the Lord the strength to recover from failures, to go forward, to strengthen our confidence in the future. And we need to dare to set out on new paths. We need you young people, living stones of a Church with a young face, but not made up, as I said, not artificially rejuvenated, but revived from within.”

(PRE-SYNODAL MEETING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE INTERNATIONAL PONTIFICAL COLLEGE "MARIA MATER ECCLESIAE" ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS Monday, 19 March 2018)

We would like to thank the members of the CEW 2019 writing team for their work establishing these themes for our Catholic schools. Many thanks to:

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Further details about CEW 2019 will be forth coming once they are finalized, and once we have a chance to meet with our new Ontario Catholic Student Trustee President and Vice-President. In conclusion, we wish you a wonderful CEW 2019! Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

**Biblical quotes in English are from the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition (NRSVCE)*

**Les versets bibliques en français sont tirés de la traduction liturgique de la Bible de l'AELF*