

# CSCO END OF YEAR

## NEWSLETTER

### ISSUE #12



Fellow CSCO members,

Thanks be to God; we made it!

What a remarkable year of unprecedented times!

The summer holidays are finally here, and thanks to our sacrifices and the provincial restrictions, the curve is going down.

Thank you, Creator God, for this much needed break!

We've worked hard, we've worked for the Kingdom; now, let us rest.

But really, a year like no other! The school year began like every other school year. The first semester progressed like any other semester. And then, 2020 came: a new year, a new decade. Bushfires in Australia; snowmageddon in Newfoundland; the downing of Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 in

Iran; Kobe Bryant, his daughter and their fellow passengers die in a tragic helicopter crash; the misdeeds of Jean Vanier become public; the COVID-19 pandemic; the terrible shootings and burnings by a lone gunman in Nova Scotia, the brutal death of George Floyd in the United States and the loss of innocent life as experienced by a mother and her three daughters in Brampton, Ontario, last week, topped the list of bad news items. Was there any good news?

Of course, there was and is and always will be! As tough as the new reality is, we all have stories of good news: personally, in our schools and in the world. We are a people of faith, hope and love, and we transmit this to everyone we meet. We are bearers of the Good News wherever we go, whoever we meet: an awesome responsibility! And life goes on because we haven't reached the Promised Land yet.



Thank you to our contributors for this edition: The HOPE Files with Nicholas Cotman, Mary Lozowsky, Richmond Guillermo, Kathy Verardi, Cathay Verardi, Krista Nolan, Christopher Moore, Carla Yousef, Steve Norman, Margaret Palmer and Damiano Femia; the Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk chaplains (Liturgy Video), Words of Wisdom from Eileen McGowan, Andrew Hall (Culture of Life Club Initiative), Don Hall (Yearbook Reflection), Andrea Taylor (Anti-Racism Statement of Solidarity and Commitment), Ann Clarke (Faith Moment), CSCO Treasury of Prayers Initiative, the Hamilton Diocesan Chaplains'

Association (Thank You from the Good Shepherd), Maureen Dufour (Reflections), Gillian Federico (Grace Notes in Miniature), and Ariana Vetere (Big News!). Enjoy!

## THE HOPE FILES

i randomly selected chaplains from various Boards to answer the following question:

*"since the emergency orders (closures and shut-downs due to the COVID-19 pandemic) and everything else that's gone on, **how or where have you found hope?**"*

the following are some of the responses i received:

Since the closure of schools and the general upturning of our day-to-day lives, instances which instill hope have (thankfully!) been found quite readily. The ultimate source of our hope, the love of God, has manifested itself on many levels: in Pope Francis standing before an empty St. Peter's Square presenting our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament to the entire world; in local communities publicly expressing their gratitude for frontline and health care workers; and, of course, in the dedication and creativity of education workers to support both one another and their students. The hope which these examples offer reveal that even the most challenging circumstances can be an unexpected source of God's grace.

*Nick Cotman  
Chaplaincy Leader, Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School  
Kingston*

During the pandemic I found hope in the witness of others. Walking through the park I saw hearts drawn by children with encouraging messages like "hope" and "you should eat ice cream". Those walks in the park were another source of hope. I watched nature march steadily to new life, unperturbed by COVID-19. It's good to be reminded that there is an order far beyond our human schedules. Our planet, the plants and creatures and the Almighty Source move to another rhythm. I reconnected to that beat as I walked with my husband, fed chickadees that landed on my hand, and watched my flowers bloom in the middle of May snow squalls.

Hope also strengthened with honest self-reflection and meditation. I realized I was not where I wanted to be. I thought I should be good at dealing with uncertainty - calm and serene in the midst of all things. In truth I was grief-stricken and unsettled. I sought help. I met with my Spiritual Director on Messenger and I listened to my favourite Sufi Meditation Music. I reluctantly became a 21st Century Learner and I like it!

*Mary Lozowsky  
Chaplaincy Leader, Christ the King Catholic Secondary School  
Georgetown  
(and her photos below):*









I've already shared this with my fellow chaplaincy leaders in Ottawa. I have to give kudos to Truday Chang for inspiring this idea upon me after she prayed with a small group of her staff. Afterwards, some of her staff said: "it would've been nice to have students join us for the rosary as well."

So when Alex (my principal), asked me what I was going to do for weekly staff prayer during covid, instead, I said I'd offer a daily rosary (Mon-Fri) for the first 2 weeks & see where that would lead? If it's too much for staff then I'll cut it down to once or twice a week.

I emailed several staff that helped already with the once a week rosary group started by 3 students at the beginning of semester 2. Ironically, only 2 staff showed up weekly in the chapel and most times I wasn't available to pray with them.

Fast forward to after March Break:

Week 1 - the same 4 staff showed up consistently Mon-Fri

Week 2 - Principal gave me permission to invite students as well. So the invite went to the 2 co-presidents first, then they sent it out to the school population via instagram. Only 1-2 students responded to the invite.

Week 3 - Consistently 4-5 staff & 4 students Mon-Fri

Week 4 - Staff started to invite students out to the google meet rosary & several others started to come out Mon-Fri

Weeks 5 & 6 - Consistently 6 staff (with an additional 3-7 staff whenever they can make it) & consistently 12 students (mostly grads and a couple high needs students) - Mon-Fri.

The first 3 weeks, staff modeled how to pray the rosary & they would share what the mystery meant to them. I knew that students and staff spoke in different languages, so I'd ask them to lead in their native language and the other staff/student would respond in their native language. One of the co-presidents is linguistically gifted, so one day he asked if he could lead the decade in Latin & I said: "Matteo, when did you learn Latin?" He responded: "I just read it online" However, when he prayed it, his speech and pronunciation sounded flawless. Since then, he's been leading in Dutch, Italian, French, Portuguese and Slovak due to his heritage. We also have other students and staff leading in French, Arabic, Aramaic, Hungarian, Czech, German and Spanish. It's turned into a beautiful multi-cultural/multi-linguistic rosary. It's given me so much HOPE in the growing faith of these young people that have been praying daily, even during the holidays (i.e. Good Friday, Easter Monday & Victoria Day).

It's been a really neat experience because different staff modelled to them the scriptural mysteries of the rosary for each decade. Some staff couldn't lead their assigned day anymore so I asked for student volunteers and the grads stepped up to the plate. The students that lead the rosary have come up with reflections from their hearts and minds that have been so moving, touching and incredibly profound! Better than most of the stuff I've found online!

I haven't prayed a daily rosary in over 16 years but this experience with both students and staff has become a highlight of my day!

I know that all of our home lives and situations are different and this form of prayer might not be your cup of tea, but it's been really encouraging to our community to be praying together daily in this way. It helps having 3 out of the 4 administrators come out to pray with us once or twice a week and they've made staff meetings take place after the 9:30 am daily rosary. It's helped me connect with even more staff because they've been emailing me prayer requests weekly, knowing that we'll be remembering them and their intentions at the daily rosary.

Rich  
Richmond Guillermo  
Chaplaincy Leader with the OCDSB

Windsor-Essex CDSB saw Hope through our students who still participated, as they wrote beautiful messages and made videos to share their faith. I also saw it through our Grads eyes when we handed out caps and tassels, the joy they felt. God it is great.

Kathy Verardi  
Campus Minister, St. Thomas of Villanova Catholic High School  
LaSalle

I reflected upon your question about hope and have considered the ways hope has found its way into my heart through all of this.



My response is, there are many! However, I have summed it up to this, prayer, scripture, connection and gratitude. This particular scripture passage really speaks to me, especially when I feel despair and fear begins to creep in:

*"He got into the boat with them and the wind died down." Mark 6:51*

I have also found hope connecting virtually with my school community (staff, students and parents/guardians), sharing daily prayers and reflections.

Finally, I have found hope through gratitude for the love of my family and friends.

I have attached a collage I created with photos of the inspiring messages and images of hope I encountered on daily walks around my community.

God bless,

Cathy

*Cathy Verardi*

Chaplaincy Leader with the NPSCDSB



Throughout the pandemic, I have found signs of God's continued presence and work among us. These have given me hope. Whether it be seeing my children learn new things at home, savouring (and watching others savour) the extra time at home with family, or working with others in creative ways to meet challenges, I have been reminded that God's Spirit is always at work.

Krista Nolan

Chaplaincy Leader with the Wellington CDSB

I'm not actually a school Chaplain. More of a wanna be!

I am a Chaplain. But in

Long-term care at the moment.

Got my interest in working with children and/or school boards from my experience with incarcerated moms and their children as a Chaplain in a Federal Prison.

What gives me hope is three fold:

I have been able to find a temporary ministry during the pandemic working with street affected persons here in Waterloo Region, at an emergency shelter programme.

My deep personal relationship with the Christ through Mary.

A relationship nurtured through time spent in informal personal prayer.

Blessings, In Faith,  
-Christopher Moore.

When the world was put on lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I first and foremost look to the Lord and find hope in His presence and promises for the future. Romans 12:12 reminds us to “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” I have found deep comfort in prayer, both privately and corporately, with family and colleagues. Early morning prayer meetings with fellow staff members have been very encouraging that as a community of believers we are seeking the Lord for protection, comfort, healing, and guidance during these difficult times.

Some have also found that keeping themselves engaged and having a structured day keeps them focused, motivated and looking forward to future events. Regular exercise, eating healthy and connecting with others via social media have been helpful for others as well. Still others have found that taking time to be outdoors in nature and gardening brings one’s attention to the Lord, being thankful for His creation and hopeful for the days ahead while planting seeds and watching them grow.

We are certainly being challenged in many ways from this pandemic, however, our hope comes from the Lord and He holds the future in His hands. Isaiah 43:5 reminds us, “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.” It is a great comfort for all of us knowing that God, the creator of Heaven and Earth, is with us and that He is our refuge in times of trouble.



Carla Yousef  
Chaplaincy Leader with the Durham CDSB

"What brings me hope is that Jesus Christ is the same as He was yesterday, as He is today, and will be tomorrow. Our God is greater than any virus or pandemic. At the same time, what brings me hope is that God desires to meet us in tough circumstances. He desires to work through doctors, nurses, medical staff, scientists, grocery clerks, gas attendants, support workers....you name it. He desires to meet people where they are through personal encounters with our neighbour. So, what brings me hope is that God is always in control and He's always working to renew hope, faith, in charity in the hearts of everyone."

Family photo (*below*): The Norman's going for a family hike to enjoy nature, fresh air, and some backpack adventures!

Stephen Norman  
Chaplaincy Leader, Holy Trinity Catholic High School  
Simcoe



Hope has always been  
a whisper for me.

It is that still quiet voice  
that can be heard between

~the broadcasts of fear  
from too much media noise

~the din of chaos

as the over-planned life

crumbles into rubble

~the lies of panic,  
depression and anxiety  
that threaten faith,  
stamina and resilience

Hope whispers this year. . .

~At the restoration  
of the family dinner table  
because there were  
fewer distractions

~Through the fuzzy face  
of a pet seeking  
a moment or two  
of attention

~When the sunset or sunrise beacons and we savour  
both their splendour and ordinariness

~As eyes yearn  
arms ache,  
and ears long  
for the mere presence  
of family members  
friends, colleagues  
and students

~In the "i miss you" emails,  
text message check-ins,  
soulful phone calls  
replete with human tenderness

~Whenever churches and schools close the doors  
to the tried and true  
and open their practice  
to reaching out anew

Anytime humanity comes  
before the mighty dollar  
time is valued  
more than the schedule  
care replaces competition  
workers at all levels  
are appreciated  
prayer and play

are recognized  
as essential as work

As for hope?  
Our task is to listen  
for its whisper  
and make it  
the latest pandemic

Margaret Palmer  
System Chaplaincy Leader with the St. Clair CDSB

I have found hope and solace in a weekly rosary online recitation every Wednesday and Sunday. Through Instagram, a fellow Chaplain (my twin brother Cosmo Femia) at our school had a great idea of starting Heralds of Our Lady to bring together students, teachers and parents across the board to come together in prayer via a digital platform. It has become a weekly routine with prayer and healing requests and has extended to the greater community in which we live. I am proud to be a constant reader and share in this faith formation that has brought many people together during this most difficult and challenging time.

Damiano Femia  
Chaplaincy  
Loretto Abbey C.S.S.  
Toronto CDSB

## **BIG NEWS!**

Ariana was married December 28, 2019, at St. Helen Church in Beamsville (*photo below*).

Ariana (Agnino) Vetere  
Elementary Chaplaincy Leader  
Denis Morris, Holy Cross, Saint Michael & Saint Paul  
Families of Schools  
St. Catharines

“Love God, serve God; everything is in that.”  
-St. Clare of Assisi



## [Grace Notes in Miniature, Thursday June 18th](#)

Dear all:

I apologise for slipping into old habits and getting this out late today; in my own defense, I did have to participate in some – carefully controlled – activities at the Board office and elsewhere and got started late on writing.





Back to the birds here, with the Black-Capped Chickadee looking for all the world like a graduate in cap and collar, - pin-striped coat even? - and the trumpeter swan, whose raucous call reflects the hoarseness of calling all the names and cheering the students on!

Wishing you a blessed Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

**Gillian**

Dear Friends:

Yesterday I went on-line for a seminar on Sacraments for which I had signed up through an email I received inviting me to participate. I signed on and found myself in company with a number of people from across the US and one from Nova Scotia - at least those were the people who identified themselves. It quickly became obvious that the session was more geared towards parish ministers than towards schools, although, recognising that Catholic schools in the US are more tightly tied to parishes, I could see that the relationship between classroom teacher and parish catechist could make them one and the same. I thought I might get some pointers to use with our Home-School-Parish initiative so stayed on the session. After some introductory material on Sacrament, Story and Situation, we moved on to consider the bleeding of youth out of our parishes and discussed statistics that were pretty much matched across the board for US and Canadian experience. Then it started gently: the introduction of the solution which was to buy the materials of the publisher who apparently was funding the seminar. And the punchline came close to the end when we were offered \$200 off the \$499 price tag of an introductory catechetical kit as a reward for tuning in. As we use the Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ program, produced by Pearson, Canada with direction from Canadian Bishops, and are very happy with it, I tuned out at that point. And spent some time thinking about the way I felt I had been played. Much like the frog in the pot of water, I naively ignored the warning signs that this was a sales pitch until it was made really clear; at least I got out of the water before it got too hot!

I know that we in Catholic education join our clergy in being concerned about the difficulties of attracting and retaining parish attendance- faith practice, even from among families who choose to send their children to Catholic schools. And why do so many of our young people leave the Church after graduating from secondary school, even if they come from faithfully practising families? Those who stay will often refer to a teacher or chaplain who reached them personally, someone whose witness touched their lives. I am not sure that any new catechetical program is the answer. We may, instead, need to be focusing on the previous generation, the parents and even the teachers.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_L9h9UjlkMM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_L9h9UjlkMM) I feel quite encouraged after participating in a very



minor way in the production of a resource aimed primarily at teachers new to our Board; next we have to engage the families.

As my mind was jumping around like a frog, I moved on to thoughts about the CBC "Ideas" program I had listened to the night before: a replay of a Massey Lecture from 1985 in which Doris Lessing<sup>2</sup>, novelist and Nobel laureate, spoke of "identity politics", and the question of personal freedom and individual responsibility in a world increasingly prone to political violence and mass unrest.

It continues to be a serious challenge to many Christian leaders that there are so many divisions – and quite vitriolic ones – within Christianity, never mind the chasms between Christians and people of other faith groups. Interfaith dialogues often stumble over seemingly minor issues.

All religious groups are accused on occasion, often by atheists, of brainwashing children to "turn them" into followers of the faith, and this argument has even been applied to activities such as Christian Meditation. <https://www.newstatesman.com/node/195087>

Perhaps this is why we put so much emphasis on the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations as we try to inculcate these in the way we teach in our schools. We are called to promote dialogue between faith and reason, to demonstrate that faith and science can coexist, to encourage students to ask questions. Socrates is quoted as saying, "The unexamined life is not worth living." We aim for every student to graduate as: A discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith community.

An effective communicator.

A reflective, creative and holistic thinker.

A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner.

A collaborative contributor.

A caring family member.

A responsible citizen.

Sometimes we have to wait for several years after our students have graduated to see the fruits of what we have planted. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrRYl\\_m3sIA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrRYl_m3sIA)

This led me to a prayer by Archbishop Oscar Romero, Bishop of San Salvador in El Salvador. He was martyred – assassinated - while celebrating Mass in the chapel of the Hospital of Divine Providence on March 24th, 1980. Pope Francis canonized Romero as a saint in October 2018.

I think that this from quotations of Archbishop Romero is a very powerful teachers' prayer:

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us. No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith. No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness. No program accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything. This is what we are about. We plant the

seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise. We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities. We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

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Bishop Robert Barron from WordonFire.org, preaching on Pentecost, asked why with all Christians in North American we weren't setting the world on fire with God's love instead of watching the fires of protest burn. It's a good question: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fouqn5Xg5-E>

As we head into the last week of what has been a very tumultuous year, with job action, Covid-19 and the protests in reaction to some tragic killings, we need to think about how we can teach and witness the love of Christ in our schools, homes, communities and parishes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kvFtXphmMU>

With every blessing, Gillian

**Gillian Federico**

System Chaplain and Faith Formation Lead

Halton Catholic District School Board

Burlington

## **REFLECTIONS**

Throughout our quarantine time, I sent a reflection to my staff.

Here are two of the reflections I sent.

Maureen

"It takes so little for me to make others feel better, that it would be unthinkable not to make the effort." (Ted Kennedy Jr.)

Maureen Dufour

Chaplain

St. Paul High School

Ottawa CDSB

Good morning,

As the weather warms up and the sun shines brightly, I think of summer and the wonder of times to come. I think of times upon the water in our canoe, of hikes along beautiful trails with the sound of water rushing by along the banks of creeks and rivers. I love sitting at the edge of the water, on the shore of a beach, and just watching it move, wondering where it is going and thankful that it has brought me such pleasure and peace.

Today's poem is short, and was written by a beloved author and poet, John

O'Donohue. I was drawn to this poem the first time I saw it in a small collection of his

poetry called, Conamara Blues.

You might remember hearing it before if you listened to a CBC radio show in October last fall, it was a poem that was only half finished before John O'Donohue passed away. It is called Fluent and it goes like this ...

I would love to live

Like a river flows,

Carried by the surprise  
of its own unfolding.

It speaks to me, of surrender, of a desire to let go of control and to just embrace what is coming with the knowledge that all will be well, we will find our balance.

Today's Psalm invites us to this same kind of surrender.

"Into your hand I commit my spirit:

you have redeemed me,

O Lord, faithful God.

I trust the Lord.

I will exult and rejoice

in your steadfast love. (Ps 31)

As we enter week 7 of Covid isolation, I am trying now, more than ever, to allow my thoughts to drift to that place of letting go and I find myself anxiously waiting to see what will unfold in my life, as we ease up on the restrictions, open up the parks, loosen up the distancing and reintroduce some services. Will I have surprised myself by the things that no longer seem to matter as much? Will I be more inclined to seek out spaces of peace rather than the next social gathering, or will I have felt so deprived that I just want to jump into it all, feet first?

I want to be surprised by my "own unfolding".

Peace,

Maureen

Good morning,

Today's piece of poetry was taken from a longer poem called Saint Francis and the Sow, by Galway Kinnell.

It speaks of new life, of life transformed from within.

The bud

Stands for all things,

Even for those things that don't flower,

For everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing:

sometimes it is necessary

To reteach a thing its loveliness,

Though

To put a hand on its brow

Of the flower

And retell it in words and in touch

It is lovely

Until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing.

This poem brought to mind the people we have seen clearing out the old debris in their gardens to make space for new life pushing through the soil.

"To reteach a thing its loveliness" - what a beautiful image of a person coming into bloom, of a child or an adult, needing the reassurance that although they may have been damaged or

broken by life, they can still “flower again from within.” I am going to hold this image in my heart as I pray today for all those who need to remember that they are beautiful and that they are loved.

In today’s first reading from Acts, we hear Phillip questioning an official about what he was reading from the Scriptures;

“Do you understand what you are reading?” And the official’s response;

“How can I, unless someone guides me?” Acts 8.26-40

We all need someone, at some point in our lives, to remind us of our own self-worth and our dignity as children of God.

In the Gospel for today we read;

“It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’” (Jn 6. 46)

May these days of isolation serve to remind each of us of our own “self-blessing.”

Enjoy your day,

Maureen

## THANK YOU FROM GOOD SHEPHERD

Hello HDCA Members

Deb received a thank you from The Good Shepherd for our donation of \$550.00.

It is good to know that our contribution is helping make life more manageable for people in need, right now.

Mary

Deb Sheldrake is the Chair of the Hamilton Diocesan Chaplains’ Association (HDCA) and Mary Lozowsky is its Secretary.



June 4, 2020

Debra Sheldrake  
Hamilton Diocese Chaplains' Association  
4069 Medland Dr  
Burlington, ON, L7M 4Z6

Dear Debra Sheldrake,

Thank you for your donation in support of the Good Shepherd's Venture Centre Market Place.

You are a partner in alleviating poverty, hunger and homelessness in our community – and we are so grateful.

Your gift helps us to provide support to men, women, children and families who are in crisis and in need of emergency food and clothing. Through your support, we can help them re-establish healthy and productive lives in our community. You have helped build hope and restore dignity to our neighbours in need.

Thank you for helping us create a more compassionate and inclusive community for our neighbours in need. We truly appreciate your support.

Thank you for helping us create a more compassionate and inclusive community for our neighbours in need. We truly appreciate your support.

God Bless,

Cathy Wellwood  
Chief Development Officer



Hamilton Diocese Chaplains' Association  
4069 Medland Dr  
Burlington, ON, L7M 4Z6

Good Shepherd  
400 King St W, PO Box 1003, Hamilton, ON L8N 3R1  
905.572.6435

**BUSINESS RECEIPT**

Location issued: Hamilton  
Date issued: June 4, 2020  
Gift Date: 25/05/2020  
Gift Amount: \$550.00

Authorized signature  
Brother Richard MacPhee, OH, Chief Executive Officer

Charitable registration No. 13063 6798 RR0001

## FAITH MOMENT

I am sharing an image of my virtual "Faith Moment" hyperdoc. Students can:

- 1) click on the Bible for an audio recording of me reading the gospel of the day
- 2) click on the framed picture to see a work of art based on the gospel of the day
- 3) click on the chime bowl for a 1 minute audio of silence with a chime at the start and end
- 4) click on the piano for a song video based on the gospel of the day

Ann Clarke, Chaplaincy Leader  
St. Patrick's Catholic High School (St. Clair CDSB)  
Sarnia



## **ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY AND COMMITMENT**

Like many people of faith, and united with Christians who also believe in the dignity of each human person, we as Catholic school chaplaincy leaders are heartbroken that the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) continue to be steeped in racism. We are growing in our understanding of the need to be actively anti-racist in a society that has been built upon white, euro-centric colonialism, and we stand in solidarity with all who are rising up against systemic racism present in our society.

As Catholic Christians, we work for and cling to the ideal that our church is universal: that all people, no matter the colour of their skin, are invited to be equal members of the Body of Christ. We also acknowledge that centuries of this understanding have not proven to be enough to undo the oppression that Black, Indigenous and racialized people face on a daily basis in North American society, or even in our own faith communities.

We work in institutions whose mission and values are rooted in love for God and for one another. However, we acknowledge that these same institutions were built by a white-centric society and openness to institutional change is needed for all to feel welcome in our communities.

We recognize that not all racism comes from a place of hatred; that even those of us who have no intention of inflicting racial injustice upon others are often complicit in our unconscious biases, our assumptions in the universality of human experiences, and in our silence when

oppressed and vulnerable people share their truth with us. In the words of Sister Helen Prejean, "Being kind in an unjust system is not enough."

At a time when this issue is front and centre, we commit to fighting racism wherever we come to recognize it - including within ourselves. Specifically, we commit to doing this work by:

- Educating ourselves by reading the works of anti-racism activists, educators, and authors;
- Seeking out and using the works of BIPOC authors, theologians, spiritual writers, and artists, attributing their work to them, and justly compensating them for their work by practicing fair purchasing;
- Never placing our own learning about racism above the experience of racism of BIPOC students, staff and families. We commit to amplifying the voices of those who go unheard;
- Creating safe spaces where BIPOC students and staff members can speak their truth without reproach or judgement, even when it makes us uncomfortable. When we do feel uncomfortable, we will examine our discomfort and question any defensiveness we find within ourselves;
- Acknowledging that our BIPOC students and staff may not have the same experience of church and faith that we have, that some of those experiences may have been negative ones, and that church may not always be a source of hope and healing due to past trauma;
- Using more inclusive language and images in our prayers, reflections, and where possible, liturgical celebrations, so that our BIPOC students and staff can see themselves reflected in the outward expressions of their faith tradition;
- Intervening in calm and respectful ways if we see racist interactions occurring, without escalating the situation, understanding that the stress, energy and social fallout in these situations is disproportionately higher for Black, Indigenous and racialized people;
- Believing BIPOC when they tell us something is racist, or that they have experienced racism. If we are told that we have said or done something racist, we will apologize and hold ourselves accountable by admitting fault and seeking to do better;
- Talking with non-BIPOC students and staff about racism. We will teach by modeling how to calmly and productively speak up when they witness discrimination;
- Valuing Black, Indigenous and other People of Colour's contributions to our culture and society. We will promote their contributions rather than appropriate them.
- Loving our Black, Indigenous, and racialized students, staff and colleagues as Christ loves us.

*(This list was compiled based on a list of examples of concrete ways white people can use their privilege for good written by Nicole Stamp*

[https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10158793642489341&id=509674340](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10158793642489341&id=509674340) )

We will continue to pray for an end to racial injustice in our communities, our nation, and around the world, and for the healing of racial trauma. May our prayers always move us to work for justice and peace for all peoples.

Signed:

Andrea Taylor  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Kandy Harkin  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Adriana Rerecich  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Marie O'Connell  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Mary Lozowsky  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Lorenzo Campanelli  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Gillian Federico  
System Chaplain  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Wayne LaChapelle  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Brian Dunn  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

Fr. Andrija Petresin  
Chaplaincy Leader  
Halton Catholic District School Board

*Andrea Taylor*

Chaplaincy Leader

Assumption Catholic Secondary School

Burlington

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better, it's not." ~Dr. Seuss*

## YEARBOOK REFLECTION

The whole world and our school year as we knew them were turned upside down this year with Covid-19. There is absolutely no going back to the old normal and some of our former ways of doing things. Although this has been devastating and challenging on so many levels, there are a number of silver linings which we need to savour. More families are now sitting down and sharing meals together on a daily basis. People are out walking in the neighbourhood, getting some much-needed exercise and enjoying the beauty of God's creation. Many people are planting vegetables and tending to their gardens like never before in the modern era.

Absence often makes the heart grow fonder. When you're unable to visit a good friend or a relative for an extended period of time, the opportunity to finally see them and share an embrace is more deeply



cherished. Although our physical health is no longer something we take for granted, the world is now blessed with both cleaner air and water.

At the school level, Mr. Daly did his very best to keep us in touch, focused and inspired with his 'Daly Daily Updates'. This helped soften the blow that our 4-time consecutive city champion boys' hockey team wasn't able to participate at OFSAA. In addition, our 4-time consecutive city champion girls' baseball team never had a chance to put on the gloves this season. The wonderful school prayers written by our students for 2020-21 now include powerful prayers for healing along with our traditional school and Marian prayers. At a school like St. Mary's, the list of notable achievements and memorable events continues during our 50th year.

Recently, I read a quote that remains timeless and more relevant today than ever. Please read it more than once and let it sink deep within. "I see you as sacred persons to be loved, persons of priceless dignity and worth. To underestimate you is to underestimate God, for each of you is sparked with His divinity." ~ John Cardinal O'Connor

Crusaders, never ever forget who made you, what you are made of and what you are called to be and commissioned to do as you continue your journey in life! Count on my prayers and unwavering support as you "live, love, learn."

### ***Don Hall***

Chaplaincy Leader

St. Mary Catholic Secondary School (Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB)

Hamilton

"My D.R.E.A.M.S. experience simply cannot be described through words or photographs, but through remembering what I have accomplished and how it has changed my life for the better. One week in the Dominican Republic allowed me to build a new home, relationships and long lasting memories for the rest of my life."

~ Taylor Patrick

*-photo below of Don and his son, Anthony (Port Dover, 2006)*



## WALK FOR LIFE

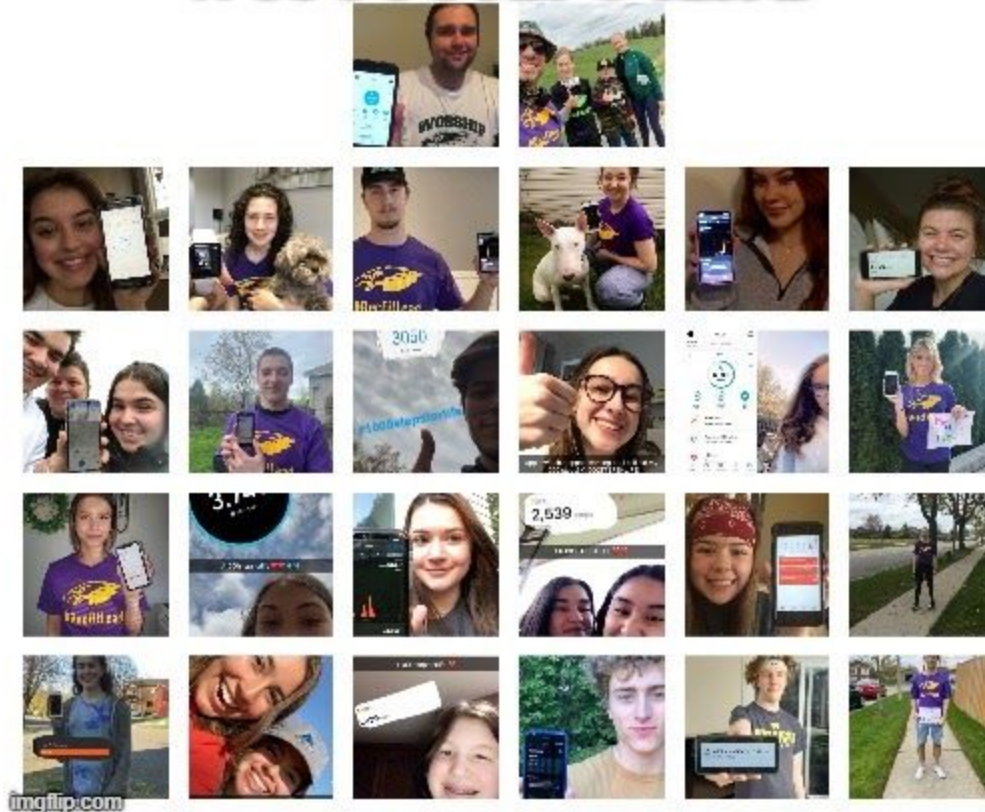
Since we were unable to attend March for Life this year, I still wanted to give our students the opportunity to do something pro-life. Therefore, we had a virtual pro-life week at St. John's College, with virtual pro-life prayers, a virtual May Crowning service, and something called "Walk for Life" which we invited Assumption and Holy Trinity to participate in as well.

The goal was for each student was to walk 1000 steps for the sanctity of life while practicing social distancing but many students walked more. 27 SJC students submitted their recorded steps and pictures. I attached a collage picture of SJC students. Together SJC walked 92,686 steps on Friday which converts to 70.63 KM.

14 students and staff from Assumption participated as well and 5 students from Holy Trinity. When we combine the steps of Assumption, which was 57,806, with the steps of Holy Trinity, which was 26,185, and add that to the steps of St. John's College, which was 92,686 this gives us a grand total of 176,806 steps, which = 134.63 KM walked as a prayer that life would be respected in all stages.

Andrew Hall  
Chaplaincy Leader  
St. John's College (Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk CDSB)  
Brantford

# SJC WALK FOR LIFE #1000STEPS4LIFE



## WORDS OF WISDOM

Dear Fellow Chaplains of CSCO,

Below is a small snippet from my retirement speech in June 2019, that I want to share with you. Most of the speech expressed my immense gratitude to more people than I can enumerate, especially my family: my husband Mark and our 5 children, who next to Jesus Christ, are my best teachers. But, I would be remiss not to mention my gratitude for the wonderful Chaplains I worked with in Durham and the amazing Chaplains of the CSCO! (especially the three who preceded me at All Saints: Julia Brady RIP, Angelo Minardi, and Francesca Scorsone), and of course, Tomy Valookaran, who was my first mentor in ministry since back in the year 2000. When I came to my first CSCO conference in January 2009, I knew I had found my “peeps”, full of joy and love for the Lord, living the dream! So, my thanks go out to all of you from the bottom of my heart, along with the hope that we will meet again sometime soon.

On my first day of work at All Saints in September 2008, I walked into the first Grade level assembly, and my new colleague, Pat O’Prey reached out his hand to me and said, “Welcome home!”

That struck me as both a really kind gesture, in the moment, but was also very prophetic in the greater scheme of things. 3 of my kids had already graduated from All Saints; my husband was first co-chair of the school council; I had been in active ministry in the local parish since 1993, so my family had deep roots in the community already. But, Pat's words meant more to me than that. Not only did the community of All Saints, and that building become my second home for 11 years, but I knew that day in September 2008, that the ministry of Chaplaincy was a "coming home" to a vocation that had been in my heart for a long time.

When I became a Chaplain, at the age of 49, it was obviously not my first vocation. Marriage and teaching had been my first vocations. I had been an Itinerant Vocal Music teacher in Toronto Catholic, then a stay home mom of 5 and caregiver for many other children. I was an occasional singer/songwriter and had spent 30 years as a music minister, cantoring and directing choirs with children and Youth (which I'm still doing). I am a Lay Associate of the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and I had worked for the Archdiocese of Toronto in social outreach ministry and Adult Faith Formation for Parish Social Ministry. (4 or 5 years of that time was with Tomy). In 2008, I still had 5 kids at home. (aged 13 to 23). I worked half time with flexible hours and a home office. We had just celebrated 25 years of marriage and life was good, manageable, comfortable. Then one day in July 2008... everything changed.

That day, Erin, my eldest, told me she was ready to move out, (and I knew in my heart that would be the start of each one of my babies leaving the nest). The very same day Francesca Scorsone, then Chaplain at All Saints, who I had been mentoring in ministry, phoned me up, and said, "Guess what, Eileen? I am going to be an army Chaplain. Would you apply for my job? You have a week. I'll call you as soon as I know if I've got it." At first I thought it was a crazy for me to consider a career change at that point in my life, but I couldn't dismiss the request because of a number of "God-incidences". The strangely right timing was first. But, also a friend of mine had suggested Chaplaincy to me in the late 90s, which is when I began Theological studies. Most compelling for me was that Julia Brady, the first Chaplain of All Saints had asked me the same thing in August 2002, when she was too ill to return to school. That wasn't the right time for me, so I had continued in my other ministry. Now, I wondered why God was messing with me, allowing this request to come to me a second time, when I thought I had put the idea to rest. So, I spent a few days in deep discernment. By the time Francesca called me back the week later, I felt like God had literally picked me up by the scruff of the neck and drop-kicked me across the room, and said, "No Eileen. You are not where I want you. I want you in Chaplaincy." In that process of discernment I felt God's definite assurance that if he was sending me, and I was chosen by the hiring committee, He would be with me through whatever came. And God always keeps his promises.

Chaplaincy has been so incredibly life-giving for me. It brought together my various life vocations and it fit my heart's desire, for that rich season of my life. It has been a source of deep joy even in the really tough times. And I have loved all of it, even if the pace was a little impossible sometimes. But, when I was called to it on the eve of turning 50, I knew that call would have a shelf life, and a "best before date" for me. So, I asked God to keep me open to recognizing when that shelf life was approaching, so that I could step away at the right time. My heart's desire began shifting when my second grandchild, Albert was born on October 5, 2018. What started as my application for a year's leave of absence for Family Care, soon became a clear decision to retire. It was a little difficult to come to that realization, last school year, at a time when All Saints had just welcomed the first year of our Arts

and Media program, with so many amazing young artists in training, and fantastic new staff members who are so dedicated to building a strong program, and bringing their very best game into the building every single day. I can't imagine how everything is working now in these times of Covid 19. But, I know that the wonderful Catholic community at All Saints, is in good hands with Paola as their new Chaplain, and I'm excited for them all moving forward. My heart told me it was time for me to step away from high school Chaplaincy at the end of the last school year. And God has confirmed that for me in more ways than I can tell you, ever since.

During these days of physical distancing, and travel bans, many of the plans I had for retirement, like everyone's plans, have been put on hold. The blessing it is to simply be alive is in new focus for all of us. So, with love and thanks, in closing I offer my fellow Chaplains a prayer that I have held close to me for many years.

*Days pass and the years vanish  
And we walk sightless among miracles.  
Lord, fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing.  
Let there be moments when your Presence  
Like lightning, illumines the darkness in which we walk.  
Help us to see, wherever we gaze, that the bush burns, unconsumed. And we, clay  
touched by God,  
Will reach out for holiness and exclaim in wonder,  
"How filled with awe is this place and we did not know it."*

from Rachel Naomi Remen "My Grandfather's Blessings" based on the Mishkan T'filah, "A Prayer for Shabbat"

May God's grace and peace be with each of you,

Eileen McGowan,

May 4, 2020.

***Eileen is a retired chaplain with the Durham CDSB***

***"Some day after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love: and then, for the second time in the history of the world, humankind will have discovered fire!"  
Teilhard de Chardin***



### **CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK PRAYER SERVICE VIDEO**

As we begin Catholic EDU Week with the theme of "Igniting Hope," The chaplaincy leaders and students of all 3 high schools in BHNCDS D have come together virtually to create a Catholic Education Week prayer service video. It's awesome to know that even in these times, we can still come together as three high schools and work together in our faith to create something for

our school communities during Catholic Education Week.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLugF6-2L\\_k&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLugF6-2L_k&feature=youtu.be)

Andrew Hall  
Chaplaincy Leader  
St. John's College (Brant, Haldimand and Norfolk CDSB)  
Brantford

## TREASURY OF PRAYERS

Hi chaplains,

Please consider sending me a prayer(s) you like to use for any occasion: Beginning of the School Year, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time, Graduation, End of the School Year, Bereavement, Crisis, Tragedy, Discernment, Friendship, Celebration, Meetings, etc. The prayer may be a personal or a contemporary or a traditional one. It could be a Saint's prayer or one that you've composed.

The prayers that you send me, I'll organize for the CSCO website (with the Communication Coordinator's help, of course).

This new section could be used by chaplains or anyone else who is looking for a prayer for a particular purpose or event.

The prayer may be short or long.

Please send me the text of the prayer and as always, if you like, please add a photo or image, to go along with it.

*WE'RE GOOD AT PRAYING AND COMING UP WITH PRAYERS.*

Send to [cscovp@gmail.com](mailto:cscovp@gmail.com).

Lorenzo Campanelli  
Bishop Reding Catholic Secondary School (Halton CDSB)  
Milton





Thanks again to Nick, Mary, Richmond, Kathy, Cathy, Krista, Christopher, Carla, Steve, Margaret, Damiano, Ariana, Gillian, Maureen, Ann, Andrea, Don, Andrew and Eileen for their contributions.

The Thanksgiving Newsletter will be issued in October.

Please consider submitting any news, prayers, poems, songs, art work, stories, reflections, or insights by October 2nd.

Send it to Lorenzo at [cscovp@gmail.com](mailto:cscovp@gmail.com).

Include a photo or image.



*Faith- and joy-filled summer holidays to  
all of you!*

*Give thanks and praise to the Lord!*