



BISHOP OF HAMILTON

MESSAGE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK 2023

The theme for Catholic Education Week this year is “*We are many, we are one*”. In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul writes, “We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members, one of another.” (Romans 12:5) Diversity and variety of gifts are a great blessing! We are all called to be distinctly ourselves; images of the Creator, and yet unified as one family, one body in Christ. The celebration of diversity and unity can bring hope and healing to our world.

Our Catholic Education community in the Diocese of Hamilton contributes to this important work. It is in the classroom where our children are encouraged to discern their unique giftedness, and have it nurtured through a variety of learning opportunities. It is through such collaborative work that educators and staff in our Catholic Schools find joy in their vocation of service to one another and the broader community. It is through prayerful support that our parishes and schools stand in solidarity with one another, on common ground, nourishing the faith formation of all those involved in the life and legacy of Catholic Education. We are one body, and we are rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ.

As a Catholic community, we journey together with our Catholic Schools. In preparation for the *Synod: Communion, Participation, Mission*, we ask the question, “How does our journeying together allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel?” We ask the same question in relationship to our Catholic Schools. When we journey together in trust, we break down barriers, and promote true encounter. When we listen to one another, we can see with “new eyes” and find commonality, even in our differences. Listening becomes welcoming. We learn patience, empathy, and support - we learn how to thrive, together.

The call of the Synod and the call of this year’s theme for Catholic Education Week is to, “Enlarge the space of our tent” (Isaiah 54:2). This can mean stretching beyond our comfort zones, and learning to love our neighbor without limitations. We make room for everyone, for everything belongs to God, and is worthy of the reverence and respect that our Creator God gives us. May our Catholic learning communities continue to be places of hospitality and dignity, for they play an important part in the work of the missionary Church.

Thank you to our leaders in Catholic education; the priests of our diocese, the pastoral workers, chaplaincy leaders, trustees, administrators, teachers, support staff, parents and guardians who build up the Body of Christ each day with prayerful witness and attitudes of generosity and joy. Thank you for your dedication to Catholic education and to the youth of our Diocese.

... 2/

May this celebration of Catholic Education Week be a recommitment for our Diocesan community, to walk together as one family, united in common mission, charity and love.

+ Douglas Crosby, OMI
(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton

May 1, 2023

/cd