

## Grace Notes in Miniature,

Wednesday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

Dear friends:

Fr Con, our Vicar for Education in the Diocese of Hamilton, posted the following link on Twitter a couple of days ago, and when a friend – thank you, Andrew, – also sent it to me today, I felt it was a sign that I should share it. One of my great-grandmothers was Irish, a younger daughter of the Guinness family known for the black brew: that may be one of the reasons why I feel so much of the Irish story-telling and music in my bones. When I clicked on the link to play it I expected to hear “May the Road Rise to Meet You”; instead it was the beautiful hymn, “Be Thou My Vision”, sung by people from churches in every county on the island we call Ireland. This in itself is a miracle, that parts of the island which have fought so violently against each other over political and religious divisions for over a hundred years have come together to sing of a common vision in Christ.

<https://youtu.be/TascsWZPj8U> (You can hear the other Irish Blessing right after in two beautiful performances at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQR70fq4rR4> and at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnXNr4r7Y5s>) This has long been a favourite hymn of mine since my grandmother sang it to me when I was a child. This grandmother was Scottish and married to the Grand Master of the Orange Lodge in our small town. My upbringing in faith was shared by my very Calvinist Presbyterian grandparents and my Scottish Episcopalian Godmother. That I became a Catholic is a story for another time; suffice it to say that Catholic/Protestant divisions in 1950's Scotland were every bit as vicious as in Ireland and my growth in faith has been a very interesting journey.

It is always worth asking ourselves, what is my vision? Especially our vision for Catholic Education? If you haven't read it for a while, may I challenge you to reread the passages of “Renewing the Promise”

which apply to you specifically. You can find it on line at <https://iceont.ca/news-and-updates/renewingthepromise/> and I believe that it is very important, especially in this time of extra special challenge, to be clear about our vision is and on whom it is centred. It might be an interesting experience to draft a personal vision and mission statement.





*Do our students clearly understand that the Ontario Catholic School Graduate **Expectations** are that: not an idea or a suggestion – but expectation that they will go into the world outside our schools continuing to develop all of the qualities described in this list as a framework for their life? Do we acknowledge the students who have shown a very clear understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ to*

*the same degree that we laud our academic achievers and athletes?*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Qm5JG8zVhk>

*It saddens me to have heard in previous years that many priests have decided not to allow graduation ceremonies in the parish church because of past behaviour of students and their guests; perhaps that we do not have this choice this year, as churches are closed to us due to the COVID-19 pandemic, may be a wake-up call for us to re-examine the place of our faith in who we are. For after all, our school communities are part of the larger faith community which finds its source and summit in the celebration of the Eucharist in our parish churches.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgkE-YmvUEk>

### **A PRAYER FOR GRADUATES**

Loving God,

we thank you for all who are graduating from our elementary and secondary schools this year. They have been entrusted to us that we might help them to learn more about you, and you have blessed them with wisdom, friendships, and skills. You continue to call them to make this world a better place because of their Catholic education. You have challenged them more this year with unforeseen conditions beyond the control of any of us; may they remember the lessons they have learned to be flexible and adaptable.

Help them to look forward to their next steps: continuing in their education or entering the work force. We pray that you help particularly those who are seeking employment to find a job suitable to their education, that stimulates them and gives them a sense of accomplishment.

Give them faith in you and in themselves and a sense of purpose. Help them to appreciate more deeply their world and the people in it, your call to love our neighbour as ourselves and to be good stewards of the world you have entrusted to us. Continue to show them that wherever their path leads they are called to serve others. And may they be always be aware that, in everything they do, they can find fulfillment in doing your will, that you will be with them always, and that you will bring to completion the good work you have begun in them.

We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen. (adaptation of a prayer from Marquette University)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGqr\\_v01xPY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGqr_v01xPY)

*With every blessing,*

*Gillian*