

JESUS CALLS ALL OF US TO SERVE IN GOD'S LOVE. HE TOLD US TO "LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU"
JOHN 15:12

Focus on Faith Update 2019

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1

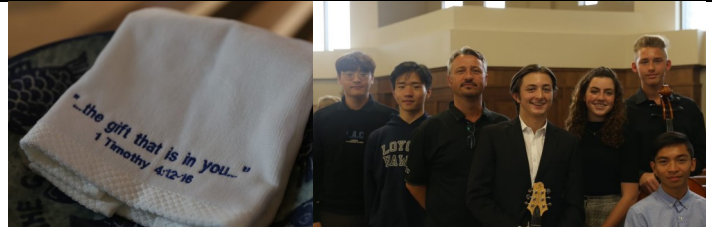
MAY 2019

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Catholic Education Week 2019 | 2 |
| The Power of Love in Action | 3 |
| Showing Love in Lent | 4 |
| Loyola Celebrates the Newly Ordained | 5 |
| Food4Kids | 6 |
| Alpha for Youth | 6 |
| Pro-Life, Pro Love | 7 |
| Snippets of our Faith in Action | 8 |
| Stealing Home | 9 |
| More Snippets of our Faith in Action | 10 |
| Stations of the Cross | 11 |
| Renewing the Promise | 11 |
| Love me - Take care of my world | 12 |
| Pray and Play Love | 13 |
| Our Catholic Schools | 14 |
| Home-School-Parish | 15 |

"Do you love me?" John 21:15-17

This year, as we continued with our response to Jesus' question, "Do you love me?", we began by hosting the Diocesan Mass in celebration of Catholic Education on September 20th at Holy Cross Parish in Georgetown. We invited all the Diocesan partners in Catholic education to recognise and share "the gift that is in you" as we go out to all the world sharing Jesus' love for us. Students from St Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Secondary School, under the direction of teacher, Tara Sauvé, enacted a very moving history of Catholic education in the Diocese of Hamilton, accompanied by music directed by teacher, Peter Posocco. At the Mass, the celebrant, Bishop Crosby, also presided over the signing of a renewal of the Partnership agreement with the Diocese, the seven Catholic school boards and St Jerome's University.



Catholic Education Week 2019

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**

Do you love me? Walk with me...

Once again this year, the Halton Catholic District School Board marked Catholic Education Week with our 10th Annual Walk With Jesus.

Students gathered at Jean Vanier Catholic Secondary School on Thursday, May 9th, to pray with Father Michael Loza before walking to the Mattamy Cycling Centre where they ate lunch together and then celebrated Mass with Fr. Pierre Caouette.

The anticipated rain held off until all students were safely on the buses and returning to their schools.

Students from Jean Vanier and Lumen Christi led everyone in making a joyful noise unto the Lord.



HCDSB Walks With Jesus 2019

The Power of Love in Action

When we read the words to the theological theme, “Do you love me?”, it reflects a special meaning to those of us who are refugees. We are the students whose very journey to a Halton Catholic Secondary School was difficult and full of struggles. We traveled a long distance and thank God every day that we ended up at St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Secondary School. There is no doubt that we are living in a time of unprecedented mass displacement due to conflict, persecution, and natural disasters. We experienced it ourselves as we are victims of forced migration. My name is Yousif and I was forced from Iraq due to war, and my classmate Joseph was forced from Egypt since he was persecuted for being a Christian. Our families are among the 65.3 million displaced refugees world-wide who are fleeing conflict, violence or persecution. We blend in with the rest of the students, attending classes and wearing our school uniforms but we never forget our long and painful journey.

When we listen to the Focus on Faith prayer and hear the question, “Do you love me?” we think about our present day life, living among a school community of love and compassion, which continuously offers refuge for those of us who suffer from injustice. Our school is providing us with a beacon of light. When our Chaplaincy Leader, Mrs. Harkin, who facilitates the student Development and Peace Loyola Student Club, invited students to join this year’s “Share the Journey” campaign, it was a call to service that none of us displaced victims of migration could resist! We knew that many of our classmates were still hurting from experiences of injustice and that these scars of disappointment and separation requires even an greater love. And it is this love that must drive our action. As D & P youth activists, we are in a position to manifest the power of love in action! The best way we could do this was by joining D & P and sharing our story with others. Many students joined D & P and we successfully ran awareness events by sharing our story at Halton’s Student ‘People of Life’ Symposium, as well as the HWCDSB and the WCDSB Student D & P workshops.

At Loyola, we had a civvies day for D & P, and we organized a walk around the track on Holy Thursday. This walk encouraged all of the classes, throughout the day, to walk at least one lap of the school’s track to both acknowledge and to be in solidarity with the many refugees and landed immigrants who were forced from their homes due to war, persecution, natural disasters, extreme poverty, and development megaprojects. Many classes participated throughout the day to support Development and Peace’s “Share the journey” campaign. We recorded on the D & P website that we walked 3,379.6 km to help show our solidarity with the 68.5 million children, women, and men who have been forced to flee their homes.

We were forced to flee, ending up at a Catholic Secondary School in Oakville. We would have never imagined that anyone would be interested in our struggles. D & P gave us a voice and the walk offered us a refuge of hope and renewal to help overcome our feelings of despair and separation. Our efforts for a successful D & P campaign was rooted in peace and offered a symbol to the surrounding community that the only power that can stand up to the power of greed, hatred, delusion and despair was justice, based in spirit and love. Our experience with D & P put the power of love in action.



By: Joseph Youssef Roshdy (Grade 10) and Yousif AlRifaie (Grade 11)
Loyola Development and Peace Club Student Representatives

Holy Trinity shows love in Lent

40 Acts of Love-April 2019

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| | 1 Tidy up your classrooms, hallways, the atrium... | 2 Smile at everyone you see today. | 3 Be good to yourself. No negative self-talk. You deserve love and kindness too. | 4 Pack extra snacks and share them. | 5 Listen without interrupting. | 6 Share your talents. Play music, bake, paint a picture, give a hug, tutor someone. |
| 7 Chat with someone you haven't spoken to in a while. | 8 Pick up litter in and around the school and neighbourhood. | 9 Write a list of things you love about a friend and give it to them. | 10 Be someone's cheerleader. | 11 Leave phones off and spend time talking to others during meals. | 12 Buy local. Support small and local businesses and artisans. | 13 |
| 14 Share your favourite Scripture, sacred or inspirational message. | 15 Walk to school or park your car further away. Enjoy nature. | 16 Bring in donation of toiletries: toothbrush/paste, soap, shampoo, body wash... | 17 Holy Thursday Say nice things about someone else. | 18 Good Friday Pray for displaced people: refugees, children in foster care, disaster survivors. | 19 Holy Saturday Reflect. How does God show his love for me? How can I show others? | 20 |
| 21 Easter Sunday Happy Easter! He is Risen! Truly He is Risen! | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |



This year for Lent at Holy Trinity we did 40 Acts of Love. Our Focus on Faith theme is "Do You Love Me?" God asks us this question and our response is "Yes, Lord we love you. We will share your love with others". We completed daily challenges that encouraged us to show love to others, ourselves, the world around us and to God. Sometimes we feel alone in our Lenten sacrifices, this gave us an opportunity to work together and to keep the season of Lent always on our mind.

For Holy Week, we had an interactive Stations of the Cross in the chapel with a variety of classes, individual students and staff. We have heard the story of the Passion perhaps many times in our life but when we take the time to stop and reflect on what Jesus experienced in his Passion we can understand the depth of Jesus' love for us a little better or deeper. With each Station, there was an action to take (say a prayer, hold a crown of thorns, wash our hands, hammer a nail, think of those we have loved and lost...). These actions helped us reflect in a really tangible way.

Chaplain Marie O'Connell



On Holy Thursday Our Lady of Victory Pastoral Team set up an Interactive Stations of the Cross to help students connect more deeply with the Easter Story. Classes and parents joined in the learning commons at a scheduled time where they rotated through each station hearing a reflection and participated in an action. Students were actively engaged and it was lovely to watch them enjoy this reflective and meaningful experience. We found the book 21 Activities that Really Work Engaging Children in Their Faith by Michelle Lepine a great resource in helping put the stations together.

Kim Curley, Pastoral Animator



Loyola Celebrates the Newly Ordained

When Seminarian Greg Merkley was assigned to serve his pastoral internship year at St. Matthew Parish, he wanted to make sure that he had the opportunity to minister to teenagers, so he teamed up with Loyola's Chaplaincy Leader, Kandy Harkin. Greg dedicated every Tuesday afternoon to serving the Loyola school community. He shared his vocation story often, one that was marked largely by the personal nature of his conversion and the continuing efforts he was making to discern God's will for



him. He built strong relationships with both staff and students, earning credibility by taking time to get to know the school community and fully immersing himself with school activities. The relationships he built were foundational because Greg understood that cooperation between the parish and the school is necessary because they both guide the young faithful toward not only academic excellence but also faith development. Greg would often share with parishioners that he was choosing to spend time at the secondary school in order to build strong relationships because the whole Catholic community, (parents, school and parish) has a role to play in passing on the faith to children and youth.

There is no question that the relationship between the school and the parish plays an important aspect of the school's spiritual ethos. When the school is anchored in Christ within the Church, it definitely creates strong, healthy and effective links with the parish. When our school Chaplaincy Leader received the call that Deacon Greg was choosing to have his reception dinner at Loyola after he celebrates his first Mass at St. Matthew's Parish as a newly ordained priest on May 4th, our school community was thrilled! Many students enthusiastically volunteered to help with all of the preparations and attend the dinner!

Greg's ordination reception dinner is a clear indicator that a healthy school/parish relationship bears much fruit. As our school community participates in celebrating Greg's ordination, as a school, we invoke God's blessing on "Father Greg"!

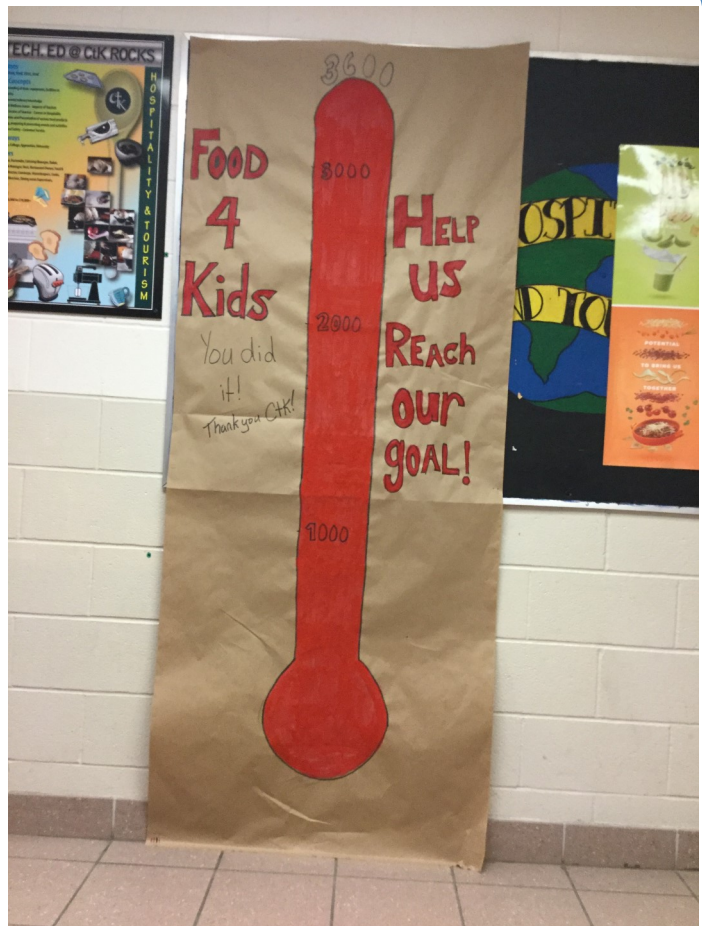
By: Isaias De Alejandro – Grade 12 Loyola Pastoral Student Team Representative

Living Lent at Ctk

Easter joy at Christ the King is heightened by our Lenten practices. During Lent we supported the local charity, "Food4Kids Halton". This local organization creates a "backpack" of healthy snacks. Vulnerable students take the snacks home on Fridays to tide them over the weekend. It is a sad reality that food insecurity in Halton is real!

Our goal was to provide enough food for the 90 students served in our community, for the entire season of Lent. First period classes collected snacks like tuna, canned pasta, oatmeal and fruit cups. We are pleased that we surpassed our goal of 3,600 food items. Some of the food was passed on to Georgetown Breadbasket. Good work, Ctk!

Prayer is another staple of Lent. We had daily Scripture Reflection in the chapel every school day throughout Lent. It was a time of personal enrichment through the word of God and a time to pray for the needs of the whole school. Every religion class had a Lenten Prayer Service in the chapel and on Holy Thursday, all students prayed the Stations of the Cross. Having lived Lent well, may all in the Ctk community experience the joy and hope of the Resurrection.



School Based Alpha Group for Youth

After a more than a year of planning, Alpha Youth has launched at Christ the King. Alpha is a programme that invites youth to delve into the deep questions of life and its meaning. The programme has three essential elements: food, discussion and fun. We begin with a social time over food. So far our menu has included tacos, homemade ice-cream, bagels and root beer. Next, we watch an Alpha Youth video and discuss various questions. We finish with fun - a game or activity together.

The core group of student helpers take time to plan the food and prepare the game. Their enthusiasm is contagious. We extend an open invitation to new participants. We anticipate that the word will continue to spread. We're excited to see how this might grow and evolve. Stay tuned for Phase Two in the Fall!

Ctk Chaplain, Mary Lozowsky

Pro-Life, Pro-Love

This year will be the last time that I attend the National March for Life in Ottawa as a secondary school student. Unlike any other year, my participation in the largest annual protest on Parliament Hill, set for May 9, 2019 will be one filled with mixed emotions. On one hand, I'm sad that this will be the last time I get to represent our school board as a pro-life student. However, I'm also excited for the opportunities that will be provided during my journey through university. As a Catholic graduate, it will be exciting to find and connect with new people, so that I can learn even more about a pro-life stance. It will also give me a chance to actively work as an advocate for life on a broader scale.

I have gone every year to the March for Life. I find it inspiring and very fitting that I conclude my secondary school experience on the year that commemorates the 50th anniversary of Pierre Trudeau's omnibus bill, which legalized abortion at every stage in Canada. 50 years is an awfully long time, and it's my hope that the new generation of youth will finally provide the push needed for positive legislation to happen. Pro-lifers will rally in front of our Parliament building and march through downtown Ottawa, proclaiming their hope that our political representatives will fight for the right to life of every human being. This milestone reminds me that the fight for life is far from over. However, it is important for us to remember that this is also a fight for love, respect, and support. As pro life people, we have a responsibility to follow through with action. Supporting and loving people throughout their whole lives is what the pro life movement is at its core. So I implore you, give your neighbour a smile. Help someone grab something from the top shelf. Show love to those you see in your day to day life, because that's being pro-life as well.

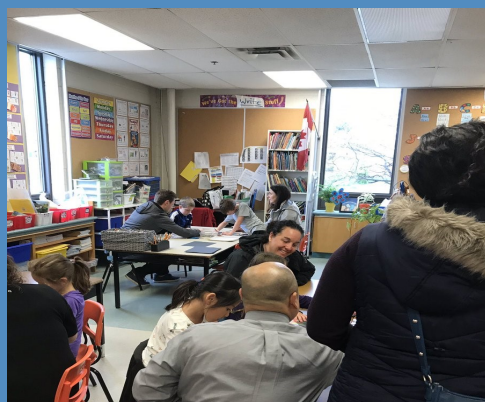
By: Kelty Barel – Grade 12 Loyola Culture of Life Student Representative



Snippets of our Faith in Action

Growing in Faith Spring Craft at Canadian Martyrs ➤

Marisa Ciallella-Pellegrini, Pastoral Animator

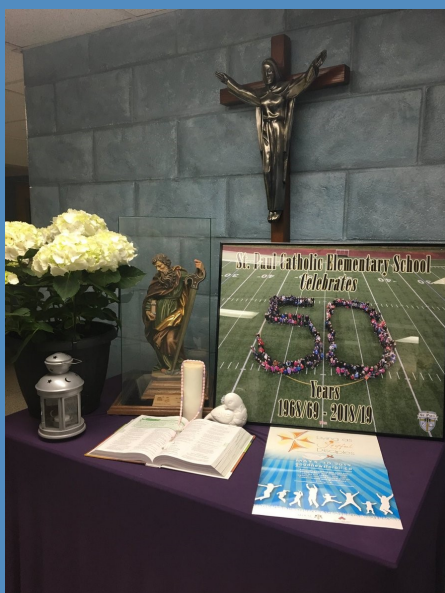


At St. Gregory the Great ...

students have the opportunity to grow their Faith through connection to our Parish. Our Prayer Pals club meets once a month to share personal faith experiences, learn through Gospel teachings and join in prayer. We are fortunate to have volunteers from Mary Mother of God Parish join our students to help them on their Faith Journey. Miriana Busija, Pastoral Animator



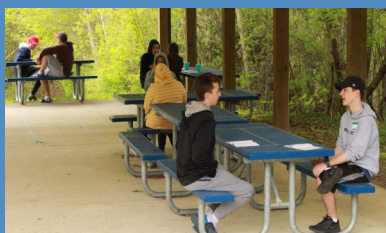
St Paul's School Celebrates 50 years! ➤



Stealing Home

Every May, a large group of Notre Dame's grade twelve students embark on a two-day overnight retreat entitled "Stealing Home". A chunk of the retreat is top secret (to maintain the surprises mostly), but the lessons learned are now public domain! I thought it would be great to share some of those insights shared by the adults and the students on the retreat.

The first lesson we all learned is that when you put away your cell phones: 1) you talk to people; 2) lose track of time; and 3) you end up being 100% present to the moment. It may sound simple, but so many of us are more concerned about the 300 people in our phone than the person sitting right in front of us. Many of the students started to notice the difference immediately. Believe it or not, after 35 hours, when I almost forgot to return their phones, they were just as surprised that they didn't ask for them back!!



The second lesson is we all need some more hope. It is no secret that the world seems to be coming apart at the seams. Sadly it seems that we communicate in 2019 by writing mean-spirited texts, by name calling, by using sexist, racist, and ageist language. It's almost as though we never stop fighting. We all learned that no matter how horrible the world (or our lives) get sometimes, we must have the hope that God alone can give. We need to cling to Jesus' great example of love and forgiveness if we are to do great things with our lives. Sometimes when our lives are falling apart, God is actually just rearranging it all so that we can be better than yesterday!

The third lesson was something we all may have known already but need to be reminded often: If you have your faith, your family, and your friends, you have everything you will even need.

The fourth lesson was that it is okay to ask questions of God and that it's okay to even be angry with God sometimes.

There is so much we do not understand when it comes to why things happen the way they do. It can be dismissive too when people say things like: "God has a plan!" "They are in a better place!" "Time will heal you." "Everything happens for a reason!". We all need to learn that is okay to question God. Our faith grows when we ask the tough questions, pray about it, and then come to some type of quiet understanding. We also learned that while it's okay to be angry with God, we just can't be angry forever. God understands hurt and anger (Lazarus dying, overturning tables, apostles and friends betraying Him).

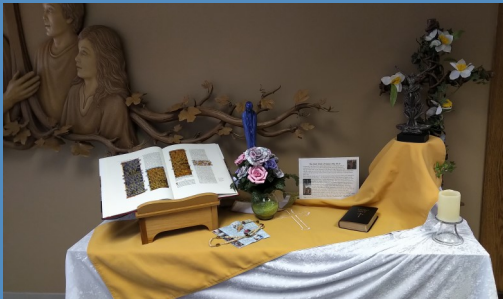


There were many other lessons we learned, but one big one came from Mr. Ned Vicic who shared that you need to follow opportunities and bring your passions with you. God opens so many doors and windows for us. We are normally too busy to see those doors and windows opening up!! If we don't listen to God for direction, we ultimately make decisions that keep us spinning or keeps us from reaching our God given potential.

Special thanks to Ms. Paradis, Mrs. Typer, Mrs. DeSantis and Mr. Vicic who helped on the overnight retreat.

More Snippets of our Faith in Action

Dedication and blessing of St →
Scholastica School

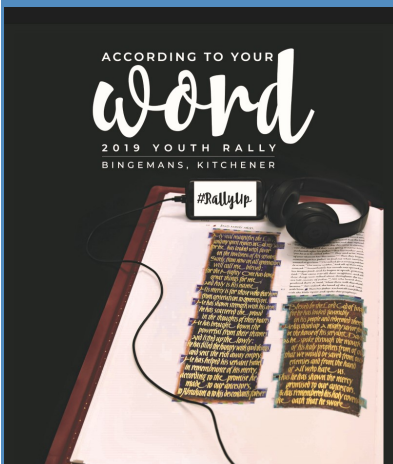


Following the
seasons of the Church Year at
← the CEC

Recognising the goodness of our →
neighbours in partnership with
the Interfaith Council of Halton



Interfaith Summer Camp for children



← Diocesan Youth Rally

Chaplains working with Religion →
teachers on new curriculum initiatives



On Holy Thursday, CEC Staff had the opportunity to participate in the Stations of the Cross acted out by students at St Timothy ...



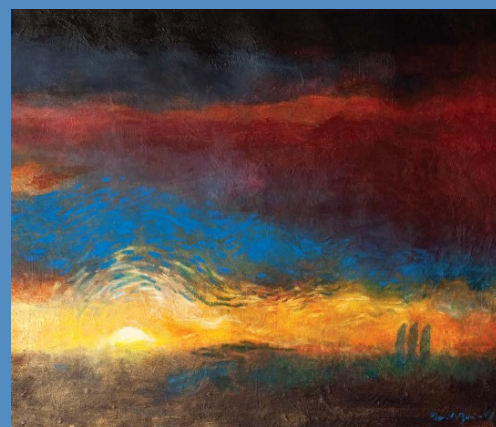
← Or to pray the Stations of the Cross at the CEC in the Board Room.



Renewing the Promise

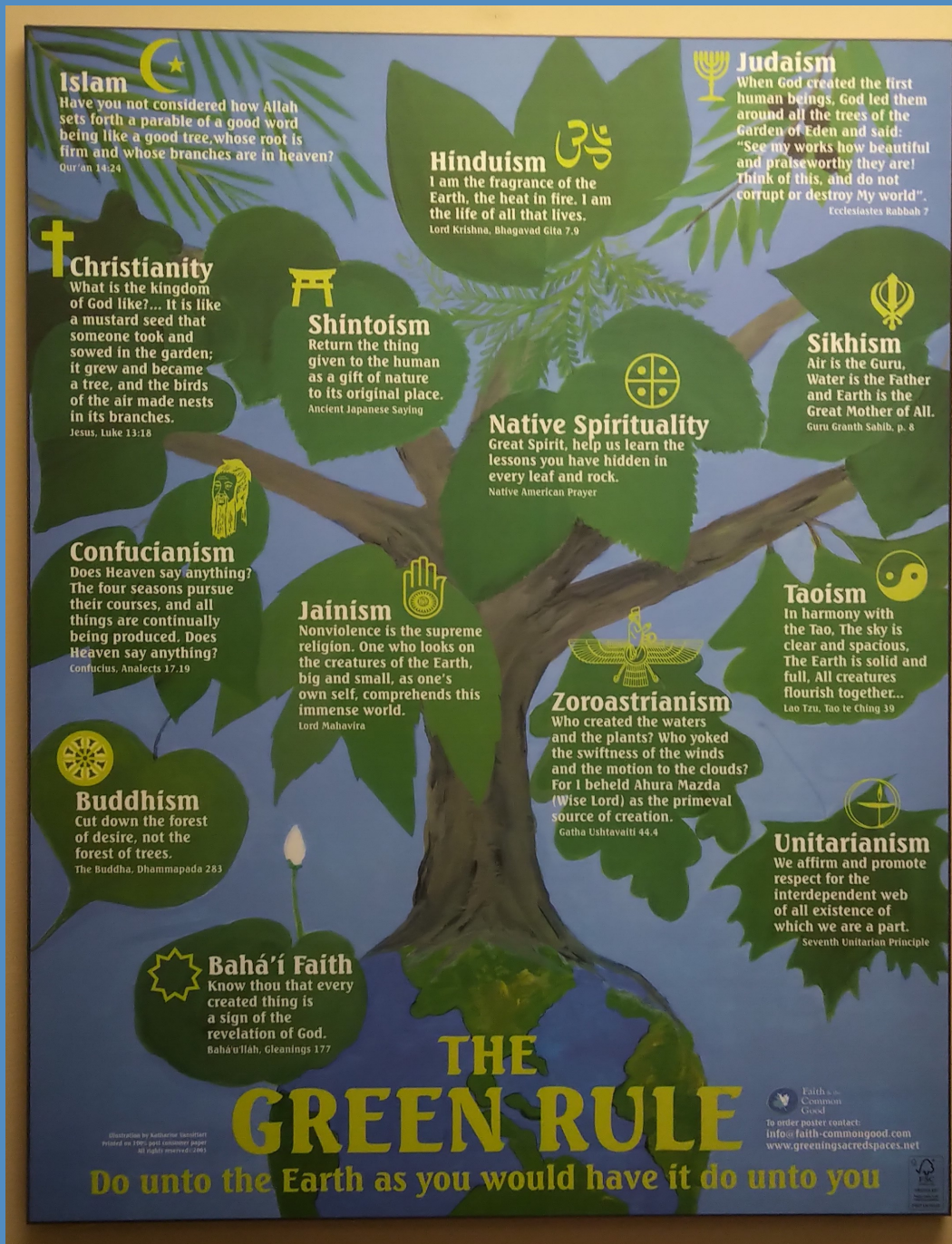
It's all about being a community that accompanies, builds relationships, encourages engagement, instills hope and forms joyful disciples.

The Ontario Bishops' recent pastoral letter, *Renewing the Promise* was released in May of 2018. This letter reminds us all of the promise of Catholic Education, that is, that our students may encounter Jesus each and every day in our schools. The gift of this letter has been a focus for many of the reflections that our staff and community have engaged in over the course of this year. Our staff have spent time reflecting on our Bishop's reflections and encouragement for all of us as Catholic educators in various roles and our personal commitment as witnesses to the presence of Jesus in our lives and the lives of our students.



Renewing The Promise
**A Pastoral Letter
for Catholic Education**

Love me – Take care of my world





Pray and Play in Love

The school communities of Holy Trinity, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Thomas Aquinas and Corpus Christi have held their most successful *Sports Drive for First Nation Youth* to date!

On Thursday, November 8, 2018, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) ventured to Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary to gather the hundreds of generous donations of sports equipment made to the M'Chigeeng

First Nation (West Bay) Manitoulin and Kashechewan (James Bay Coast) youth. Items donated included bikes, scooters and bags of hockey equipment!

The donations will be delivered to the communities by OPP Staff Sergeant, Kevin Morgan, who graciously accepted the donations at Holy Trinity.

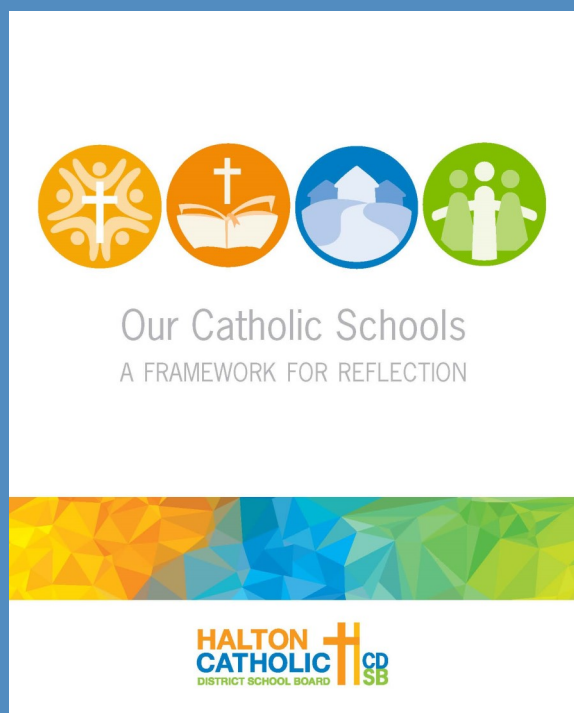
This year, the Holy Trinity school community also made a \$1000 donation to ProAction Cops & Kids, an initiative that pairs local at-risk youth and Halton Police officers in skill-building and mentorship programs that create trust, respect and safer communities.

A special thank you goes to Holy Trinity, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Thomas Aquinas and Corpus Christi teachers for organizing the drive.

Congratulations to the Oakville and Burlington school communities on your tremendous outpouring of donations and support to youth in need!



Our Catholic Schools— Updated and Renewed



Over the past year, a team has engaged in a review and update of the *Our Catholic Schools: A Framework for Reflection* document to reflect our current Catholic educational landscape.

The Ontario Bishops' recent pastoral letter, *Renewing the Promise*, is woven throughout the *Framework for Reflection* to align our vision of Catholic education in Halton with the Bishops' Christ-centred vision of Catholic schools as communities that accompany, build relationships, encourage engagement and instil hope, and form joyful disciples. This document will provide school communities with a fulsome resource to enable them to reflect on their distinctiveness as Catholic Schools and consider the impact that their work has on our students.

Schools will begin to use this document for reflection in September 2019.

Participation in the Community: Home-School-Parish Partnership

A group of chaplains, pastoral animators, administrators, parents and parish workers has met several times this year to set goals for this initiative. As one of the pillars of our Board's Strategic Plan, it calls on us to work together to strengthen the three arms of the triad to work in harmony. At the first meeting, Jeremy Staples led us through a visioning exercise; subsequent gatherings resulted in goals for groups centred on the Families of Schools with their supporting parishes and parent communities. By starting with small projects, we hope to establish a firm base on which to build momentum and enrich the role of all three partners in the lives of our students. Projects have included: introducing students to the work of parish organisations, holding a pasta supper/talent show to support the parish building fund for a new church, a neighbourhood clean-up, and joint social events. We are working to make this relationship blossom!

