



## BISHOP OF HAMILTON

### MESSAGE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

The theme of this year's Catholic Education Week is "Igniting Hope". Even in the midst of difficulty, we are a people of hope – hope for the world, hope for the future, hope rooted in Christ. We all need hope.

As we look around us, we see many struggles and challenges. The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world reminds us that life on Earth is not perfect; we do not yet live in heaven. As Christians, however, we can make sacrifices, and look upon these struggles and difficulties with hope. To be a resurrection people means that we know our Savior lives! He is the source of our hope. This is a great gift we have to offer the world – our hope.

In our publicly funded Catholic schools in Ontario, our hope is alive! Over this past school year, we have faced our own struggles, including the unprecedented shutdown at schools across Canada. Through it all, you have been witnesses to hope. In the weeks and months you spent in your classrooms, you remembered and celebrated the birth of Jesus, and you told the story and prayed together in hope, looking forward to His coming. In parishes across the Diocese, we celebrated Confirmations together and saw scores of young people coming to the Sacraments, continuing their journey of faith, opening themselves to the power of God's grace. Some are still preparing for their celebrations. These are experiences of hope – for the young people and their parents as well as for pastors and parishes and teachers and school communities. We began our Lenten preparations together and then found ourselves at home. We learned about caring for one another through social distancing. We learned that even when we are apart from one another, we are joined as one Body by the foundation of our hope as Christians – the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Publicly funded Catholic schools are places of hope! I know you have found ways to be people of hope in your communities and beyond. You have given hope by helping the poor, marching for clean and safe water, reducing your waste, striving for justice for the unborn, witnessing to your faith in Christ courageously in your neighbourhoods and across the globe. I am grateful to the priests of the diocese, the pastoral workers, the chaplaincy leaders, the trustees, administrators, teachers, parents and all involved in Catholic Education for your ongoing collaboration and dedication. Your leadership and the ways in which you work together for the common mission of Catholic Education is a sign of great hope in our communities.

Hope is a work of the Holy Spirit. It is rooted in our faith in Christ. It keeps us steady when times are challenging. It empowers us to be a people ready to proclaim and witness and work for God's kingdom here on Earth. That hope lives in each one of us – young and old. And together, as one body, we can allow that hope to give energy to our ideas and activity, our learning and our prayer.

In the words of Saint Paul, ***"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*** (Romans 15:13)

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May 3, 2020