

The Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association L'Association canadienne des commissaires d'écoles catholiques



Newsletter
June, 2007

President's Message

In her challenging keynote address to the delegates at the April NCEA conference in Baltimore, Sr. Clare Fitzgerald wondered what "the Captain's log" would record about the state of Catholic education in our time. What will be said, she asked, of our personal and collective contribution to ensure that Catholic education under our watch is the "Anchor of Faith/Harbour of Light"?

We know full-well, both personally and collectively, that sometimes the commitment wavers, the skills fall short, the decision-making gets fuzzy, and the meetings less than productive. Thus, as those entrusted with the stewardship of Catholic education, we acknowledge that we need spiritual reflection as much as skill, the Eucharist as much as meetings, acts of social justice as much as decision-making. We take Sister Clare's challenge seriously. We look forward to having Sister Clare share her wisdom with us when we gather for our annual conference in June in Sault Ste. Marie.

Over the past months, the Board of Directors has been diligently carrying out the mandate of our association, a few of which I will highlight here. In early February, with Greg McNally, Executive Director, laying the groundwork, we held the first of what we hope will be an annual meeting with MPs. It was an excellent meeting, giving us the (... 2)



CCSTA President
Dr. Bonaventure Fagan

Message du président

Dans un discours d'ouverture ambitieux aux délégués de la conférence NCEA en avril dernier à Baltimore, Sœur Clare Fitzgerald s'est demandée ce que « le journal de bord » allait tracer sur l'état de l'éducation catholique de nos jours. Que sera dit, demanda-t-elle, de nos contributions personnelles et collectives pour assurer que l'éducation catholique, sous notre garde, soit « l'ancre de la foi / refuge de la lumière » ?

Nous savons trop bien, personnellement ainsi que collectivement, que parfois l'engagement vacille, les compétences ne sont pas à la hauteur, les décisions prises sont embrouillées, et les rencontres très peu productives. Donc, pour ceux qui se voient confier l'intendance de l'éducation catholique, nous reconnaissons qu'il nous faut autant de réflexion spirituelle que de compétences, l'Eucharistie autant que les rencontres, des actes de justice sociale autant que des prises de décisions. Nous acceptons le défi de sœur Clare avec sincérité. Nous attendons avec impatience d'avoir sœur Clare partager avec nous sa sagesse lorsque nous nous rassemblerons au cours de notre conférence annuelle de juin à Sault Ste. Marie.

Au cours des derniers mois, le conseil d'administration a réalisé le mandat de notre association avec diligence. Je vais vous en souligner quelques grandes lignes. Au début février, avec Greg McNally, Directeur Exécutif, instaurant (... 2)



The Sault's All Set!

The CCSTA Convention 2007 will live out its theme "Voyageurs in our Faith - Gathering to Make a Difference". Regis O'Connor, Brenda Blalock and Janine Brodie, pictured here, say all is ready to go for the Convention in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, from June 7-9, 2007. Be there! (See page 3 for more!)

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chance to interact with some fifteen MPs and senior officials on the contribution, past and present, of Catholic education in the shaping of Canadian society.

In February I attended a congress on Catholic education in the Americas in Buenos Aires. A report posted earlier on the CCSTA website provides details. In April, Greg McNally and I attended the NCEA convention in Baltimore. President Karen Ristau and other members of the executive welcomed us most hospitably. Other delegates from Canada, administrators and teachers from Ontario and Saskatchewan among them, were also in attendance. Greg McNally and Margaret Shea-Lawrence gave a well-organized and clearly presented session on *Build Bethlehem Everywhere*, sparking a great deal of interest among the delegates present (a full room).

In late April I brought greetings to the annual meeting of the Ontario Catholic Trustees' Association, OCSTA, in Toronto. CCSTA supports OCSTA in remaining firm in its determination to ensure that students continue to have the right to attend Catholic schools.

On the publications front, the DVD/CD of *Build Bethlehem Everywhere* will be available by June. Readers gathered in January/February at the CCSTA office to record their specific chapter. We thank them for that great contribution of time and skill. At the same time, *Bâtir Bethléem en tout lieu* was released in the Winter and interest has been high.

Plans for the June 5-7, 2008 convention in Brantford are in place. Each year our convention makes a great impression on us, in part from the excellent planning by the host committee and in part from the keen interest delegates bring to the gathering. Commit to Brantford, commit now!

In 2008, September 26-27, in Ottawa, CCSTA is hosting a national conference on Catholic education. Quite different from our own conference, this gathering will appeal to parents, clergy, religious, Catholic associations, teachers, administrators, as well as trustees. The focus will be on embracing a future-oriented commitment to Catholic education. Certainly the past will be acknowledged, the present will be described and discussed, but the energy that Catholic education needs now must be future-focused.

As this school year comes to a close, I want to pay tribute to the members of the Board of Directors, to our chaplain and to our office staff for their commitment and dedication to the workings of the CCSTA. To all of you, my fellow trustees throughout Canada, for your dedicated service and inspirational leadership to Catholic education, I say a sincere thank you. May all of you have a safe summer of relaxation and joy.



Bonaventure Fagan
President

la fondation, nous avons tenue la première de ce que nous souhaitons deviendra une rencontre annuelle avec des députés. Ce fut une excellente réunion qui nous a donné la chance d'interagir avec une quinzaine de députés et cadres supérieurs sur la contribution, passée et présente, de l'éducation catholique dans la formation de la société canadienne.

En février, j'ai assisté à un congrès sur l'éducation catholique dans les Amériques à Buenos Aires. Un compte-rendu affiché plus tôt sur le site Internet du CCSTA fournit plus d'information. En avril, Greg McNally et moi-même avons assisté à la convention NCEA à Baltimore. Le président Karen Ristau et d'autres membres exécutifs nous ont accueilli à bras ouverts. D'autres délégués du Canada, incluant administrateurs et enseignants de l'Ontario et de la Saskatchewan, étaient présents. Greg McNally et Margaret Shea-Lawrence ont offert une session clairement présentée et bien organisée sur « Bâtir Bethléem en tout lieu », dégagant beaucoup d'intérêts parmi les délégués présents (une pleine pièce).

A la fin avril, j'ai apporté mes salutations à la rencontre annuelle du « Ontario Catholic Trustee's Association », OCSTA, à Toronto. Le CCSTA soutient le OCSTA à rester ferme dans sa détermination à assurer aux étudiants le droit de poursuivre leurs études dans des écoles catholiques.

Au sujet des publications, le DVD/CD de « Build Bethlehem Everywhere » sera disponible en Juin. Des lecteurs ont été réunis en janvier et février au bureau du CCSTA pour enregistrer leur chapitre spécifique. Nous les remercions pour leur contribution en temps et compétences. En même temps, « Bâtir Bethléem en tout lieu » a été lancé cet hiver et l'intérêt fut élevé.

La planification pour la convention du 5 au 7 juin 2008 à Brantford est en place. A chaque année, notre convention nous laisse une impression formidable, en partie grâce à l'excellente planification du comité hôte et en partie grâce à l'intérêt dévoué qu'apportent les délégués à cette rencontre.

En 2008, les 26 et 27 septembre à Ottawa, le CCSTA organise une conférence nationale portant sur l'éducation catholique. Assez différente de notre propre conférence, ce rassemblement plaira aux parents, clergé, religieux, associations catholiques, enseignants, administrateurs ainsi qu'aux curateurs. L'attention se penchera sur l'adoption de l'engagement d'un futur orienté vers l'éducation catholique. Certes, le passé sera reconnu, le présent sera décrit et discuté, mais l'énergie que nécessite présentement l'éducation catholique doit se concentrer sur l'avenir.

En approchant la fin de cette année scolaire, je souhaite porter hommage aux membres du conseil d'administration, à notre chapelain ainsi qu'à notre personnel de bureau pour leur engagement et leur dévouement aux tâches du CCSTA. A vous tous, chers membres curateurs partout au Canada, pour votre aide dévouée et votre direction inspirante à l'éducation catholique, je vous remercie sincèrement. Je vous souhaite à tous un bon été rempli de relaxation et de joie.



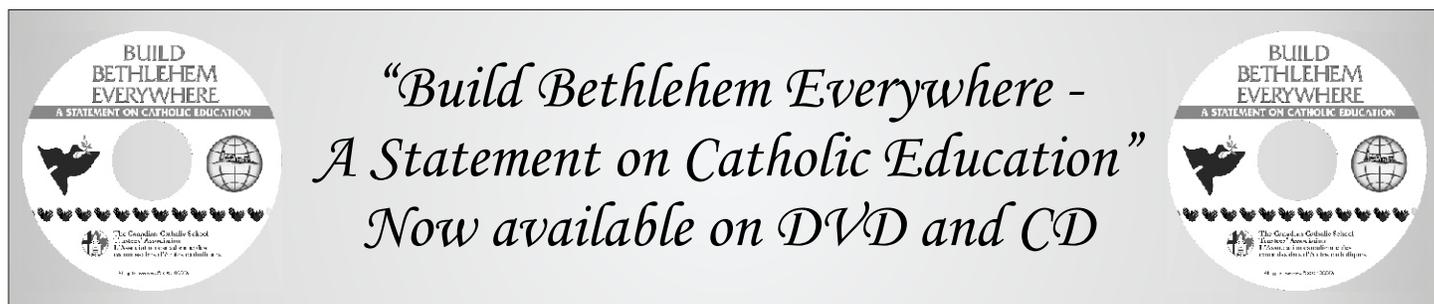
Bonaventure Fagan
Président

The Sault's All Set!

The host for the 2007 CCSTA Convention and Annual General Meeting, The Huron Superior Catholic District School Board, has all plans finished and awaits the arrival of delegates, spouses, companions and guests to Sault Ste. Marie on June 7-9. Registrations have kept coming in during May and the crowd that gathers will not be disappointed.

From the Opening Ceremonies on the Thursday evening through to the closing banquet on Saturday, attendees will experience liturgy, keynote speakers (Sr. Clare Fitzgerald and James McCracken), workshops, business sessions, entertainment and hospitality. The Organizing Committee, co-chaired by Marchy Bruni and John Caputo, is most excited about the high level of participation from its Catholic schools, with students partaking in every aspect of the event, from choirs to liturgy to artwork to prayer pals to decorations. This Convention is truly a community effort and celebration. The Board has been blessed with strong sponsorship support from the local business community.

On Thursday afternoon, the CCSTA Board of Directors will plant a tree at St. Basil Secondary School and present a plaque to Board Chair Marchy Bruni to commemorate this national celebration of Catholic education. The Sault Ste. Marie hosts look forward to sharing the beauty of the natural gifts of their distinct area of Canada. Welcome to Convention 2007 ... this gathering will make a difference!



“Build Bethlehem Everywhere - A Statement on Catholic Education” Now available on DVD and CD

Build Bethlehem Everywhere - A Statement on Catholic Education is in its fourth printing and has been distributed worldwide. Now it is available in DVD and CD formats. The DVD and CD took their text from the *Build Bethlehem Everywhere* book, with eight readers, all leaders in Canadian Catholic education, providing the narrative.

The DVD version also features reflection questions on each of the chapters which could be used for group discussion at workshops and meetings in the Catholic community. These new formats will prove to be a real asset both in presentations and in dialogue on the many themes contained in *Build Bethlehem Everywhere*. Check the website (www.ccsta.ca) for information on cost and shipping.

CCSTA Clips....

Don't forget, *Bâtir Bethléem en tout lieu - un énoncé sur l'éducation catholique*, is here. The French translation of *Build Bethlehem Everywhere - A Statement on Catholic Education* was completed earlier this year and is available through our CCSTAoffice. The cost is \$5.00 per copy plus minimum cost for shipping and handling.

President Bonaventure Fagan and Executive Director Greg McNally were invited as special guests to join in the opening ceremonies for the National Catholic Educational Association Convention in Baltimore, Maryland in April. NCEA President Karen Ristau introduced “our Canadian colleagues” to the more than 8,000 Convention delegates. Karen spoke of the high quality of the CCSTA book *Build Bethlehem Everywhere*. Greg McNally and Marg Shea-Lawrence, Superintendent with the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, presented *Build Bethlehem Everywhere* in a workshop to over 100 educators from the United States, Australia and Canada.

During its winter meeting in Ottawa, the Board of Directors hosted an early breakfast meeting on Parliament Hill for 12 members from the Conservative, Liberal and New Democratic parties. President Bon Fagan spoke a few introductory words regarding the national scope of Catholic education, setting the stage for dialogue and conversation for the gathering. The Directors were most pleased with the strong support these MPs showed for Catholic education. For the next year, they have asked each MP to bring a colleague to join us for food and conversation.

CCSTA thanks....

Dr. John Flynn for his continuing work on the history of the Association from 1985 to 2004.

Sault Ste. Marie MP Tony Martin for announcing in Canadian Parliament on May 15th that World Catholic Education Day was being celebrated on May 17th, for his accompanying supportive remarks and for his press release.



Join Us in Brantford in 2008 “Building on our Strong Foundation- Church, Home, School, Community”

Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board looks eagerly forward to hosting the 2008 CCSTA convention in Brantford, Ontario from June 5-7. The keynote speakers will include Rev. J-Glenn Murray, SJ and Sr. Anne Bryan Smollin, Ph.D. Both are internationally recognized motivators and crowd pleasers.

The dynamic Fr. Murray is a member of the Maryland Province of Jesuits and served as the principal drafter of the U.S. bishops' document, “Plenty Good Room.” He currently teaches at two seminaries, lectures widely in the areas of liturgy and culture and is the Director for the Office of Pastoral Liturgy in the diocese of Cleveland. He is an inspiring preacher who uses song and humour to share messages that resonate with all audiences.

Sr. Anne Bryan Smollin always receives rave reviews for her enormous energy, insights, and sense of humour. Sr. Anne is Executive Director of Counseling for Laity, which offers guidance for married couples, families, adults, and adolescents. She serves as a therapist, consultant to hospitals, and adjunct professor at several colleges. Sr. Anne is also President of the Board of Clowns on Rounds

and the author of four books: *Tickle Your Soul: Live Well, Love Much, Laugh Often*; *Polish Your Soul and Spruce Up Your Heart*; *God Knows You're Stressed: Simple Ways to Restore Your Balance*; and *Jiggle Your Heart*.

Workshops will be hosted by local and provincial personages. The committee is planning exciting pre-convention tours and spousal programs as well as administrators' workshops and student trustee sessions. Brantford is a place of history and you could certainly spend a profitable few days relaxing in the area. The Board will highlight its schools and students in many ways. The food will be delicious and the entertainment exciting!

The major venue for the conference will be the Best Western Brant Park Inn, conveniently situated off Highway 403 with easy access from all compass directions. Brantford is extremely close to Toronto and Niagara Falls which are certainly “must sees” for those of you from other provinces. For more details about the speakers and the conventions, visit the website www.ccsta2008.com. Mark June 5-7, 2008 on your calendar now and plan to join us. You'll be glad you did!

Louise Ervin to Receive Higgins Award

The Justice James D. Higgins Award in recognition of exceptional service to Catholic education in Canada will be presented to Louise Ervin of Ontario.



Louise has been an active leader in Catholic education at the board, provincial and national levels for more than 20 years. She has served as Trustee and Chair of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and as Director and President of the Institute for Catholic Education (Ontario), as well as holder of numerous leadership roles in education and community organizations.

Louise was instrumental in the development of the CCSTABy-laws and in the move of CCSTA to Ottawa to be close to our national partners. *Build Bethlehem Everywhere* was published during her time as President. She has represented CCSTA nationally and internationally. Louise is a strong supporter of the “Toonies for Tuition” campaign and an organizer of the OCSTA fundraising for Catholic schools in Newfoundland Labrador.

Louise is a graduate of the University of Ottawa and has worked as an instructor for the Head Start program in Ottawa and as a social worker in Ottawa and Winnipeg. She is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Waterloo. She and her husband, Bob, have two daughters, Kimberly (married to Paul Mendonca) and Natasha and are the proud grandparents of Chloe, Olivia and Jack.

“I have always considered working in Catholic education in Ontario and Canada a special privilege,” Louise states. “Along with my family, I wish to thank all associated with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board for their continuous support. To receive the Justice Higgins Award, presented to such great leaders in Canadian Catholic education, is truly humbling. Thank you.”



The Higgins Award will be presented to Louise Ervin at the Convention's closing banquet on June 9 in Sault Ste. Marie. Thank you and congratulations, Louise.

PLEASE HELP A CATHOLIC STUDENT!

“TOONIES FOR TUITION” DAY: October 2nd, 2007

The CCSTA has established an Endowment Fund to assist students attending those Catholic schools which have limited or no public funding. Our “Toonies for Tuition” campaign is the main source of revenue for this fund.

This year please designate **October 2nd** as your “Toonies for Tuition” fundraising day and encourage members of your Catholic community to donate two dollars to the Endowment Fund. All proceeds will go toward student tuition.

Catholic schools in Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland Labrador receive NO public funding. Manitoba and British Columbia receive partial funding (50%). Only Catholic schools in Ontario, Alberta / NWT, Saskatchewan and the Yukon receive full government funding.

Tuition costs range upward to \$5,000. annually depending upon some government funding and local school costs of education.

For more information on the Endowment Fund, please visit our website at www.ccsta.ca

Money raised may be sent by cheque to:



CCSTA
Catholic Education Centre
570 West Hunt Club Road
Nepean, Ontario. K2G 3R4



Thank you and God bless you for your generous spirit of sharing!

CCSTA to Host National Conference on Catholic Education

Ottawa will be the gathering spot for Catholics from across Canada to come together for a conference on the future of Catholic education in our country. The “Catholic Education: A National Conversation” conference will be held on Sept. 26-27 (Friday & Saturday), 2008 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Ottawa.

The main purpose of the conference is to gather Catholics from all walks of life to share in a conversation that will help us to understand better our future direction in Catholic education. Keynote presenters and small and large group discussions will lead us to achieve this purpose.

This national conference differs from our annual convention in that we are reaching out to the larger Catholic community—asking students, parents, educators, clergy, sisters, parish organizations to join trustees and administrators. This conference should build on the dialogue already happening in our provinces. The CCSTA Board of Directors feels that the time for such a conference is now. We experience many threats to Catholic education and we need to express to Canada who we are as Catholic schools and why we are such an important part of this country’s past, present and future.

Build Bethlehem Everywhere states in its introduction that “Catholic education is part and parcel of the mission of the Church... (and) we must address the great and over-arching issues of Catholic education that touch the lives of all Catholics.” That is why we are hosting a national conversation on Catholic education. Please join us in Ottawa in 2008. More information on the conference will be available at the 2007 convention, on our website and through the mail. Stay tuned!

Learn more about the story and history of Catholic elementary and secondary education across Canada.

‘Catholic Schools Across Canada - Into the New Millennium’

Edited by John J. Flynn and published by the Canadian Catholic School Trustees’ Association.

CCSTA Conventions

2008 - Brantford, Ontario - June 5-7

2009 - Victoria, British Columbia - June 4-6

2010 - Ottawa, Ontario - June 3-5



Highlights from Provincial Reports

BRITISH COLUMBIA

This spring Janita Diodati, Superintendent of Schools for the Vancouver Archdiocese, is retiring. Doug Lauson has been appointed as the new Superintendent, effective July 1.

In 2007, both the Catholic Independent Schools of the Vancouver Archdiocese and the Victoria Diocese have hosted two major conferences...The Victoria Diocese will host a Summer Institute on the theme of "Administrator as Spiritual Leader".

The strategic plan for Catholic education in B.C., developed in 2006, has begun its implementation process...The Federation of Independent Schools in B.C. has been active in its presentations and dialogue with the provincial government on educational issues.

The CISCBC (Catholic Independent Schools Committee of BC) meets twice annually to discuss policies and practices specific to Catholic schools.

FISA Catholic representatives are Joe Colistro (Victoria), Doug Lauson (Vancouver), Richard Kohlen (Kamloops). Colleen Easson of Prince George Diocese is the CCSTA representative.

The Victoria Diocese is making plans to host the 2009 CCSTA in Victoria on June 4-6. Plan now to attend this great Catholic event!

ALBERTA/ NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) has expressed its concern to the provincial government of "Bill 1: Lobbyist Act". ACSTA, while recognizing the spirit of the Bill, feels that potential conflicts from its enactment outweigh the good. The Association has asked for the

same exception as afforded municipalities in Alberta.

ACSTA continues to provide on-going advocacy and legal counsel for the court case in Yellowknife, N.W.T. centred upon the historical precedent determining the right of an exclusive Catholic education system to exist, which is founded on Canadian legislation.

Members of ACSTA continue to have many opportunities for faith development through the hosting of workshops and conferences. ACSTA held its 2007 Spring Conference in Yellowknife on March 9-11 with Dr. Kathleen Chesto as keynote speaker. A true faith experience, the conference delegates were touched by the numerous performances from many Catholic schools, including the performance of a song written especially for ACSTA.

SPICE and Blueprints conferences were held on April 26-29 and May 1-4 respectively.

The ACSTA President and Executive Director attended the Religious Education Congress in Anaheim, California in March.

ACSTA continues to maintain active communication with its member boards and with external organizations. This is done through many methods, including the publishing of its Annual Report and the Catholic Dimensions newsletter.

ACSTA is a powerful and effective voice for Catholic Education in Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

SASKATCHEWAN

The public boards of Saskatchewan are pressing the government to proceed with a constitutional reference on the mandate of Catholic separate schools. This initiative was put on hold pending the outcome of the Theodore lawsuit wherein the public boards brought charges that St.

Theodore was not formed for the right reason (too many non-Catholic students) and that the government was misappropriating funds by paying grants to Catholic boards for non-Catholic students. The Catholic boards' position has not changed; they will insist that the present court case continue to completion.

The Catholic Connections Committee has been formed of reps from Catholic organizations across the province to address challenges and discuss issues facing Catholics.

The Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association is undertaking a provincial Catholic curriculum project to infuse Catholic values into the provincial curriculum.

Executive Director Julian Paslawski who has served Catholic education for more than 50 years, will retire this June. Ken Loehndorf will be the new Executive Director, effective July 1, 2007.

MANITOBA

Robert Praznik was appointed by Archbishop Weisgerber as the new Director of Education for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Catholic Schools (AWCS) effective January 2007. The AWCS represents the ten schools in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. Robert has spent the past seventeen years working in the CSC, including six years as principal of St. Gerard's School (N-8).

The AWCS will be entering into its third year (2007-08) of providing educational and administrative services to the schools in the Archdiocese of St. Boniface and the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Winnipeg. Collaboration among all Catholic schools in Manitoba has benefited all schools as there is strength in numbers and greater opportunities for professional development and shared services.

Catholic Schools Day was celebrated on February 16th at St. Paul the Apostle Church. A Liturgy was celebrated by Fr. Mark Tarrant of St. Charles Catholic School and Fr. Mark Miller of Saskatoon did a presentation on "end of life issues" to the teachers and support staff of all the Catholic schools in Manitoba.

On April 19th, the Catholic Foundation of Manitoba presented the Catholic Schools of Manitoba with the Caritas Award. The Catholic Foundation of Manitoba is dedicated to the permanent administration of funds held in trust for religious, charitable, educational and cultural purposes within the province of Manitoba. At its annual Caritas Dinner, the Foundation honours organizations or citizens who have distinguished themselves by their commitment and devotion to their community and Church.

ONTARIO

2007 continues to be a time of opportunities and challenges for Catholic education in Ontario. The Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA) is pleased that the Grants for Student Needs was released in March, yet funding shortages remain a concern. Current shortfalls in funding are in special education, capital building projects, salaries and facilities maintenance.

OCSTA continues to press for regulatory and

legislative amendments to improve the accuracy of the voters' list and assessment roll. Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne is supportive of OCSTA's position. The French Catholic boards have been working closely with their English colleagues to resolve this issue.

OCSTA has been active in responding to pressures from individuals and groups to eliminate publicly-funded Catholic education and have one school system in Ontario. The Association keeps members informed of the latest challenges and of the erroneous nature of some statements against Catholic education. It re-launched "Our Catholic Schools" provincial dialogue, engaging thousands of parents, students, teachers, trustees, staff, clergy and others in impassioned dialogue about the importance of their Catholic schools and their hope for the future. In April, OCSTA hosted a Lobby Day at Queen's Park in Toronto with provincial MPPs.

The Association understands the wishes of other faiths to have their own schools and supports financial assistance for faith-based schools that meet the current standards and accountability measures required for publicly funded education in Ontario

OCSTA will be meeting with all provincial party leaders prior to the fall election to solicit once again their opinion of, and support for, Catholic education.

OCSTA knows that first and foremost our Catholic schools have been sustained over the past 160 years because we are a people of faith. We are committed to the academic and spiritual development of our children through our enduring gift ... Catholic education.

NEWFOUNDLAND LABRADOR

The recent provincial budget was eagerly anticipated by our schools with the hope that some financial assistance for our students and families might be included. The budget did include a provision to cover the cost of textbooks for students from K-12. We are still trying to determine if our independent school students are covered by that initiative. To date we have been unable to obtain confirmation from government. Should we again be excluded, the three schools will proceed with a brief to government seeking financial support.

Programmes at our schools continue to provide the students with award-winning experiences. Both Immaculate Heart of Mary in Corner Brook and St. Bonaventure's College in St. John's excelled at Kiwanis Music Festivals locally. In addition, St. Bonaventure's was presented with an international band performance award at a recent competition in Florida.

The three schools maintain their viability despite the magnitude of their financial challenges. We remain particularly indebted to our professional staff, who persist in their exemplary efforts on behalf of our students, while subsidizing the financial stability of our schools through their salary concessions.

The schools have committed to participation in the "Toonies for Tuition" project. St. Bonaventure's College will be forwarding more than \$600 to CCSTA as the result of their recent fundraising activities.

As always, we express our gratitude to our friends across the country who continue to provide moral, financial and spiritual support to our Catholic school communities.

Chaplain's Corner



During the Romanian dictatorship of Elena and Nicolae Ceaucescu in the 1980s, a woman spoke out against the dictatorship. Because of her courage she was marked for secret execution. When the security forces came to her house, she let them in. They took hold of her to tie her up and blindfold her. But she turned to them and requested that she be allowed to go to her room and change her clothing. Totally surprised by her request, they let her go. The woman came back a short while later in her best finery, with make-up and her hair done up. She turned to her executioners and said, "You may now do what you have been ordered to do. Thank you for letting me put on my best clothing and look my best. I do not want to be sent to the Lord without a proper dress." Her executioners were so overwhelmed by her response that without a word they turned around and left the house.

In our best moments we ask ourselves how this woman came to have such love. How did she become so intimate with the Lord and so generous? We who have committed ourselves to the mission of Catholic education dearly desire this sense of love not only for ourselves but also for the children and teens in our schools. To teach love is difficult, if not impossible. Even though Jesus on the eve before his death commanded his disciples to love as he loved, we know that love is not something one can "command." Love is not as teachable as other subject areas in our schools. The Judeo-Christian command to love God with your whole being, we believe, does not start with my will and effort. The Romanian woman's intimacy with the Lord reflected a much more delicate life journey and narrative. She knew herself loved and was so much in love that she wanted to be at her best, at her most attractive. She had learned something about the Lord which gave her this courageous freedom in the face of death. She was secure in her love.

During the Easter season the liturgy instructs us in the love that revealed itself in the raising of Jesus. One of the ways it does it is by telling us the parable of the good shepherd. It is probably one of the most down-to-earth stories of Jesus. Jesus' shepherd was not some kind of romantic figure. The shepherd, despised as they were in Israel, exposed him(her?)self fully to the elements. The shepherd's whole life was determined by the sheep. The shepherd walked among them all day, led them to pastures, slept among them to keep warm, knew each sheep with all their stubborn and mindless traits, and probably smelled like them and was covered with the dirt that clung to their wool. This total pre-occupation and dedication of the shepherd is a metaphor for Jesus. It is a parable of his love.

During his ministry Jesus once told another parable, this time about yeast. He compared God's kingdom with a woman who hides some leaven into three measures of flour. At first reading the parable presents an idyllic image until you ask yourself why does she hide the yeast? And why is God like this hidden yeast, a substance derived from dank, decaying bread which the Israelites were NOT to put in their dough for the Passover, or which Christians are NOT to put in the Eucharistic bread? And why does the woman need so much flour - three measures, the equivalent of a hundred and forty-four cups of flour. It is enough to make at least forty-five loaves of bread! She will need a bathtub to hold the dough. This is not a pious image of God. God is presented as this yeast grown in a dark, damp place that is hidden in the flour. But this yeast hidden in the flour works secretly and ultimately pervades everything. The results are marvellous. There is enough there to feed a huge crowd. This, Jesus says, is a parable about God. This is how God works among us. As in the parable of the good shepherd, it is a God who associates with dirty sheep and smells like them. Like Jesus he does it by associating with all the wrong people, the dirty sheep of his time: the sinners, tax collectors and prostitutes. The secret of God's love is revealed in the ones who were attracted to Jesus. The Jesus we want our students to come to know is not the pious, harmless Jesus. His true yeast is hidden in unexpected places and people. God still does not mind getting dirty with the dirty. Having committed to humans of all stripes, God is as ferocious as the shepherd not to let go of anyone.

We need to be taught this love. This love is the gift that created our world. It is the love the woman must have known. It is this love, faith in this love, that we hope to pass on to the next generation as the true source of their life. That love is transformative of the world, but only if we have enough faith to bask in it.

John van den Hengel scj



"Toonies for Tuition"



"The CCSTA's 'Toonies for Tuition' program has helped two Catholic families meet their financial obligations to our school. The families not only appreciate the financial help, but they also feel good about themselves by fulfilling the tuition requirements. Ultimately, it is the children who benefit from this fundraiser."

Brent Arsenault, Principal

St. Mary's School, Prince George, B.C.