

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: PILGRIMS OF HOPE

L'éducation catholique: Pèlerins de l'espérance

February 2025 Bulletin

PILGRIMS OF HOPE ~ OUR CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Last month, our bulletin highlighted some of the foundational elements that shape our Catholic identity. Together, we are called as Pilgrims of Hope to celebrate this identity and foster a renewed sense of hope in those around us. This month, we will highlight our Catholic Social Teaching. This issue will also promote the month of Holy Family which we celebrate during February and its connection to the CST - Call to Family.

Catholic Social Teaching

"The Church's Catholic Social Teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amid the challenges of modern society."
(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) refers to the body of doctrine developed by the Catholic Church that guides how individuals and society should approach issues of justice, peace, human dignity, and the common good. These teachings are based on biblical principles, natural law, and Church tradition, and they are intended to inform how Catholics live in the world and engage in social, political, and economic life.

The principles of CST include Dignity of the Human Person; Common Good; Solidarity; Preferential Option for the Poor; Stewardship of Creation; Subsidiarity and the Role of Government; The Call to Family, Community and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Economic Justice and Peace.

Dignity of the Human Person

This is the foundational principle of all Catholic Social Teaching and is grounded in the conviction that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and, therefore, possesses inherent dignity and worth.

Common Good

The well-being of all people, especially the most vulnerable, must be promoted through social, political, and economic structures that contribute to human flourishing.



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Solidarity

We are members of one human family, regardless of our national, racial, ethnic, economic, or ideological differences, and our love for all of our sisters and brothers compels us to work for peace and justice.

Preferential Option for the Poor

The needs of the poor and vulnerable should take priority, and society should work to eliminate poverty and injustice.

Stewardship of Creation

The environment and natural resources should be used responsibly and protected for future generations. We are reminded of the gifts of this beautiful world that God created and entrusted to us, and of our responsibility to care for and protect it.

Subsidiarity and the Role of Government

Decisions should be made at the most local level possible, with higher levels of authority intervening only when necessary, ensuring that communities and individuals have the freedom and capacity to make decisions for themselves.

The Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Emphasizes the importance of family and community life as the foundation for a just society. People have a right and duty to participate in society, making sure that everyone has access to opportunities to influence decisions that affect their lives.



“We are stewards, not masters of our earth. Each of us has a personal responsibility to care for the precious gift of God’s creation.”
Pope Francis



“ Let us keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity, which grants freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility for the common good from those who wield greater power.
Pope Francis ”



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Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has basic rights, including the right to life, food, shelter, and education. Along with these rights come responsibilities, both to oneself and to others, in promoting justice and the common good.

Economic Justice

Emphasizes that economic systems should be structured to serve the common good, promote human dignity, and ensure fair distribution of resources. It is the equitable distribution of wealth – sufficient to enable all human persons to live a life of dignity and community.

Peace

Emphasizes the role of Christians in actively working for peace. To be in right relationship with God and with each other. This involves supporting peace initiatives, advocating for justice, and working to heal divisions in society.

Through the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching, we can identify tangible ways to honour our responsibility to contribute to the building of a just world amidst the challenges of modern society. Catholic Social Teaching guides us in making choices that promote justice, peace, and human dignity, all of which are central to our pilgrimage of hope.

“If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”
St. Teresa of Calcutta



Prayer for Solidarity

Loving God,

As we gather in solidarity, we thank you for the diverse community you have created, for in our differences, we find strength and love.

May our hearts be open to those around us and may we act as instruments of your peace and compassion. Guide us to build bridges of understanding and unity, that we may truly live as one body in Christ.

Empower us to serve those in need, embracing all as brothers and sisters in faith.

Amen.



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Catholic Education Week Subthemes

Let us take a more in depth look at the five subthemes for Catholic Education Week and the ways in which we can be Pilgrims of Hope when we: *Honour Human Dignity, Care for Creation, Respond to the Poverties of this World, Serve in Solidarity and Live as Peacemakers.*



By Honouring Human Dignity

As Pilgrims of Hope, we are called to respect and defend the dignity of each person, recognizing their value, especially those who are marginalized or suffering. We can reflect on our words and actions to ensure they are kind and nurturing, supportive and nonjudgmental. As Pilgrims of Hope, we can strive for humility, attentiveness, respect, compassion and justice in all our interactions.

"FOR IT WAS YOU WHO FORMED MY INWARD PARTS; YOU KNIT ME TOGETHER IN MY MOTHER'S WOMB. I PRAISE YOU, FOR I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE." PSALM 139: 13-14



By Caring for Creation

As Pilgrims of Hope, we recognize that we are stewards of God's creation. As we walk in hope, we care for the environment and work toward sustainability, ensuring that God's creation is protected and preserved for future generations.

THEN GOD SAID, "LET US MAKE HUMANS IN OUR IMAGE, ACCORDING TO OUR LIKENESS, AND LET THEM HAVE DOMINION OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA AND OVER THE BIRDS OF THE AIR AND OVER THE CATTLE AND OVER ALL THE WILD ANIMALS OF THE EARTH AND OVER EVERY CREEPING THING THAT CREEPS UPON THE EARTH." GENESIS 1:26



By Responding to the Poverties in our World

As Pilgrims of Hope, we are called to think first of the needs of those who are most vulnerable. Through our hope we respond to the poverties in our world by recognizing the struggles of others, especially the marginalized, and by working toward justice. Our pilgrimage becomes a path of compassion and care for those who are suffering.

"BLESSED ARE YOU WHO ARE POOR, FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD." LUKE 6:20



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By Serving in Solidarity

Solidarity is an essential part of being a Pilgrim of Hope. It means walking with others as members of one family, regardless of race, nationality, or background. We are called to work together to promote peace and justice, not just for ourselves, but for all people. Solidarity is a key principle of our shared journey toward a world where everyone's rights are respected, everyone belongs, and the common good is upheld.



† "IF ONE MEMBER SUFFERS, ALL SUFFER TOGETHER WITH IT; IF ONE MEMBER IS HONORED, ALL REJOICE TOGETHER WITH IT. NOW YOU ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST AND INDIVIDUALLY MEMBERS OF IT."
1 CORINTHIANS 12: 26-27



By Living as Peacemakers

As Pilgrims of Hope, we walk together in community, creating paths of peace and healing through our courage and willingness to offer hope and light to all whom we encounter. We participate actively in the life of the Church and society, promoting relationships of love and service

"BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY WILL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD." MATTHEW 5:9 †

Prayer for Peacemakers

Father in heaven,

We thank you for your guidance as we pilgrim through life filled with the peace of Christ.

May we continue to reflect the image of your Son as we ask for the strength to be forgiving, the understanding to show compassion, and the love to be gentle to others.

Be our guiding light as we journey together to become builders of peace.

May the grace of this Jubilee year awaken the flame of hope within each of us and inspire us to be peacemakers within our communities.

Grant us the strength to be leaders of peace as we journey through the Holy Doors and rediscover the infinite mercy of the Father.

We pray this to you our Father in heaven.

Amen.



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February ~ Honouring the Holy Family

Did you know that February is the month dedicated to the Holy Family? Many of us recognize October as the month dedicated to the Holy Rosary, May as the month dedicated to our Blessed Mother, and June to the Sacred Heart, but how many of us know that the month of February is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Family?

The Holy Family refers to the family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They are the holiest of families, and therefore a model for all Christian families. They were holy because they placed God at the center of their family life, they loved and sacrificed for one another, and they shared this love with others.

This month, we are invited to honour the Holy Family while at the same time strengthen our own family life. Our Catholic Social Teaching, Call to Family, supports individuals in their roles as family members and emphasizes the importance of family life in society. As we recognize the Holy Family as the first domestic church, we are reminded that families are a sign of God's love for his people.

The Holy Family -Jesus, Mary, and Joseph - serves as a powerful and inspiring model for all families in several ways. Their example reflects the virtues and values that Catholic families are called to embody in their daily lives.



“—
| “LOVE BEGINS AT HOME, AND IT IS NOT HOW MUCH WE
| DO... BUT HOW MUCH LOVE WE PUT IN THAT ACTION.” |
—”

—ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, NO GREATER LOVE

The Holy Family Models for Us:

Love and Respect


The relationship between Jesus, Mary, and Joseph was grounded in mutual love, respect, and care. The Holy Family teaches families today the importance of love, respect, and harmony within the family.

Obedience to God's Will

Mary's yes to God's plan in the Annunciation and Joseph's obedience in protecting Mary and Jesus show a deep commitment to following God's will, even when it was difficult. The Holy Family teaches families today to follow God's plan in their lives and to trust in God's guidance.

Prayer and Faith

The Holy Family's life was infused with prayer and faith. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph regularly participated in Jewish religious practices, and they trusted in God's plan throughout their lives. The Holy Family teaches families today that praying together as a family, attending Mass, and reading Scripture are important ways to strengthen faith and grow closer to God.

Reflection Questions 

How can we journey as Pilgrims of Hope with our families?
How can we model the love of the Holy Family in our relationships with others?



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The Holy Family Models for Us:

Unity in the Family

Despite the challenges they faced, the Holy Family supported each other and remained close. Their unity in love and faith was at the heart of their strength as a family. They teach families today about the importance of being united in love and purpose, especially in times of hardship.

The Importance of Family Time

The Holy Family spent time together, even though their life was full of challenges. They supported each other, prayed together, and worked together in their daily lives. The Holy Family reminds families today of the importance of spending quality time together as a family. Whether it's sharing meals, praying together, or just being present for each other, these moments create lasting bonds and help families grow in love and faith.



Strengthen your family bonds through shared joy. During the month of February, plan something fun you can all do together! Maybe it is a family outing to a sporting event, ice skating, or a movie.



In summary, the Holy Family serves as a model for all families by showing us how to live lives centered on love, faith, sacrifice, humility, and trust in God. Their example challenges all families to cultivate these virtues in their own homes, leading to deeper relationships with one another and with God.



“The family, which is founded and given life by love, is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. Its first task is to live with fidelity the reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons.”

Familiaris Consortio, Pope Francis

Reflection Questions

How can we be models of Christ's love in our homes?

How do we teach virtues such as charity and service?

How can we better imitate the Holy Family in our daily prayers and attitudes?



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Prayer to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
in you we contemplate
the splendour of true love; to you we turn with trust.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
grant that our families too

may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel
and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth,

may families never again experience violence, rejection and division;
may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth,
make us once more mindful

of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Graciously hear our prayer.

Amen.

(Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia, 325)



How can families journey together as Pilgrims of Hope?

Today as many pilgrims are making their way to Holy Doors opened for the Jubilee Year, families are encouraged to go on a pilgrimage of their own. During this Jubilee Year of Hope how can your family journey as Pilgrims of Hope?

- **Participate in the Sacraments:** Families can focus on regularly attending Mass, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).
- **Prayer:** Families can dedicate more time to daily prayer together. This might include praying the Rosary, reading Scripture, or offering prayers of thanksgiving and petition as a family.
- **Engage in Acts of Service:** Families can look for opportunities to help those in need, whether by volunteering at local food banks, shelters, or supporting families in need. Giving time, talents, and resources can help families live out the call to care for others.
- **Community Outreach:** Acts of kindness, such as visiting the elderly, helping neighbours with tasks, or providing emotional support to those struggling, can be a meaningful way for families to demonstrate solidarity.



POPE FRANCIS REMINDS US IN "AMORIS LAETITIA" ("THE JOY OF LOVE"), SUBTITLED "ON LOVE IN THE FAMILY, THAT:

“NO FAMILY DROPS DOWN FROM HEAVEN PERFECTLY FORMED; FAMILIES NEED CONSTANTLY TO GROW AND MATURE IN THE ABILITY TO LOVE.”

Families are encouraged to grow together in holiness and share God's love in their daily lives. May the Holy Family inspire family life today to be rooted in faith, hope and love.



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Jubilee Year 2025 Resources



COMING SOON

**GOODNEWSFORALL.CA RESOURCES:
Resource Kit - Elementary and Secondary**

NEW

Elementary Booklist

CCCB Adult Faith Resources on the Jubilee Year 2025

NEW

CCCB Catechetical Activities for Children and Youth

Here you will find age appropriate catechetical resources for children and youth that provide opportunities for reflection on the themes outlined in the Papal Bull of Indiction Spes Non Confundit, issued 9 May 2024.

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

Monthly Intentions

Our Catholic Identity Posters

These posters will be made available to Catholic school boards to celebrate Catholic Education Week.

Amoris laetitia (The Joy of Love)

Post-synodal apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis addressing the pastoral care of families.

Jubilee Year Calendar of Major Events



NEXT MONTH'S FEATURE

Pilgrims of Hope and Our Catholic Identity:
Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Share

Interested in sharing what your school community is doing to promote the Jubilee Year ~ Pilgrims of Hope? Email: julie.webster@dpocdsb.org



Ontario Catholic Trustees' Association

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: TOGETHER IN FAITH