



*“Faith that is ... Celebrated”*

April 2013\*

**SUGGESTED OPENING SONGS:**

*Christ, Be Our Light* – Bernadette Farrell

*The Light of Christ* – Donald Fisher

**OPENING PRAYER:**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of light,

You bring joy amid our darkness.

Open our hearts more fully to the light of Your abiding presence,  
that we might find true happiness and wisdom.

Grant us the humility to allow You to clothe us in Your beauty.

Grant us the strength to be witnesses to Your goodness in the world.

Grant us the wisdom to hear and speak Your truth.

Grant us hearts that overflow with love and care for the most vulnerable.

Grant us courage to co-create with You in this world You have wonderfully made.

Grant us an increase in faith, to dispel the darkness of doubt.

We make this prayer to You in the name of Jesus, Light of the World.

Amen.

**READING: John 1:1-4**

In the beginning was the Word

and the Word was with God

and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through Him all things were made;

without him nothing was made that has been made.

In Him was life and that life was the light of all humanity.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Gospel of the Lord:      **Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**QUESTION FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:**

How do I reflect Christ's light?

**READING: Our Struggle to Celebrate**

What does it mean to celebrate something? To celebrate an occasion is to heighten it, share it, savor it, enlarge it. We also celebrate in order to link ourselves more fully to others, to be playful, to intensify a feeling, to bring ourselves to ecstasy and more commonly, just to rest and unwind. But, because of our incapacity to enjoy something, simply we often try to create that enjoyment through excess and seek the ecstasy of heightened self-awareness in the obliteration of our consciousness.

Small wonder we often trudge home with a hangover, emptier, more tired, more alone. A hangover is an infallible sign that somewhere we missed a signpost.

But we must continue to try. Christ came and declared a wedding, a feast, a celebration, at the heart of life. He shocked people as much by the way He enjoyed His life, as by the way He gave it up. In the end, He was rejected as much for His message of enjoyment as for His message of asceticism. That is still true today. We tend to read the gospels selectively so as to ignore Jesus' positive challenge to enjoy without guilt.

And in that lies our problem; because we are never challenged religiously and in the name of Jesus, to enjoy, deeply and without guilt, the very human pleasures of our lives, our healthy, God-given need for pleasure and enjoyment tends to go underground. We still seek pleasure and enjoyment, but now we split them off from what is religious and holy and 'steal them from God' rather than enjoy them simply and religiously. That is one of the main reasons why we substitute excess for enjoyment and an obliterated consciousness for heightened awareness.

God has given us permission to enjoy life and its pleasures. That truth too needs to be a central part of our religious teaching. Pleasure is God's gift, not the forbidden fruit.

Our Struggle to Celebrate <http://www.ronrolheiser.com/columnarchive/?id=443>

**QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION/REFLECTION:**

How do we celebrate life's simple pleasures?

- in our lives?
- in our Catholic educational communities?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

Loving God,

You sent forth Your Son to bring hope to all peoples.  
As Teacher, He upheld the importance of education.  
As disciples, we look to Him for inspiration and strength.

Adapted for RCCDSB use.

Thank You for the many sisters, brothers, priests and laypeople who have dedicated their lives in service to our Catholic schools.

Thank You for the trustees, administrators, educators and support staff who sustain our schools today.

Thank You for the parents who support and witness to the importance of Catholic education in their children's daily lives.

Thank You for the students who work hard to further their education.

Bless our schools and the many people who advance our mission.

May this building be a home for those who seek to grow in faith, knowledge and loving service.

May our community always support one another and extend hospitality to newcomers.

Fill our minds with the gifts of knowledge and wisdom.

May our understanding of the world help us to grow in their appreciation.

Fill our hearts with gladness.

May we always turn to you in times of celebration and times of need.

Fill our hands with the tools we need to serve others.

May we show them your unceasing love through our actions.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us.

St. André Bessette, pray for us.

St. Marguerite D'Youville, pray for us.

Canadian Martyrs, pray for us.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

(Adapted from Catholic Schools Week Prayer <http://www.thereligionteacher.com/catholic-schools-week-prayer/>)

**SUGGESTED CLOSING SONGS:**

*City of God* – Dan Schutte

*You Are the Voice* – David Haas