



Catholic Schools Educating the Soul In a Technological Age

**Renfrew County Catholic School Board
School Council Gathering Opening Prayer**

Virtue Links: Faith, Hope, Love, Fortitude

Catholic Character Themes: Community, Discipleship, Solidarity, Stewardship

INTRODUCTION

Good evening. A warm welcome to all of you who serve the Catholic educational community as members of our board's school councils. As we begin this evening of sharing and reflection on our mission, it is fitting that we start with prayer.

Let us begin with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

OPENING SONG

Please join in singing our opening song, *We are Called*, verses 1-3 (CBWIII No. 476)

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, by our Baptism, you have made us heirs to Christ's gift of abundant and everlasting life. Grant that our communities might be enflamed with love for this wondrous gift, as we work to educate the soul of young people in homes, parishes and schools. We make this prayer to you through Christ our Lord. Amen

And now, let us be attentive to God's word.

READING

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (Rom 12, 4-12)

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so now we, who are many are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering, the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

REFLECTION

Each of us has been called at Baptism to a role in building up the body of Christ. Our response to this call is the work of a lifelong journey made in faith. In this blessed journey, there is much

more at stake than our individual salvation, and we will only come to know the impact of our prayer and example when we reach the journey's end. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit is there with the gifts we need to help one another along the way. This is especially true in our relationships with the young people in our homes and schools. As parents, pastors and educators, we know that a faith lived day-to-day in prayer, worship and kindness is far more convincing than words alone. Yet, here too, the Spirit's gifts enable us to move beyond our own limited efforts, to reach out to Christ in others – especially the poor and vulnerable – putting flesh on the religious language we use in our homes, churches and classrooms. It is this witness to a living faith that will form their minds and hearts and guide them through the spiritual perils of this post-Christian secular age.

Through God's mysterious design, we have been called to a journey that is at once our own and at the same time shared for the benefit of countless others. We nurture our own journey in faith so that we might nurture in turn all those we are called to serve. We do so as part of a living body, united in the Spirit with the past, present and future members of the baptized. We rely on the prayers of those who have gone before us and of those who accompany us in the journey of faith we share. And as we joyfully embrace our commitments to teach and witness our faith along this pilgrimage of grace, let us give thanks for its fruits, which overflow into our young people's lives, strengthening the body to the glory of God in Christ.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

1. Let us pray for the Church, that all who share a common baptism might embrace the Holy Spirit's call to live their lives as a journey in faith. *We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.*
2. Let us pray for the world, that all God's children might find ways to treat each other with reverence and build nations of peace. *We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.*
3. Let us pray for those who suffer in our communities, that we might use the gifts the Spirit has given us to bring them Christ's comfort. *We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.*
4. Let us pray for all of us here this evening, that our hearts might be opened more fully to the Spirit's call to be Christ's witnesses as we journey in faith. *We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.*
5. Let us pray for our speaker this evening, that the Holy Spirit might inspire his words, and open our hearts to his message, that we might embrace more fully our call to live by faith as Christ's disciples. *We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.*
6. For our own intentions..... *We pray... Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us gather into one the prayers we have spoken and those that remain in our hearts, and unite them with the ongoing prayer of Jesus to the Father on our behalf, using the words our Lord has taught us: *Our Father...*

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, you share your very life with us through our baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus, your Son. May our journey in faith lead us ever more deeply into the mystery of your love for us in Christ and make us ready to share the riches you have lavished on us in the power of your Holy Spirit. We make this prayer to you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

Please join in singing our closing song, *Come and Journey With a Saviour*, verses 4-6.