



Renfrew County Catholic School Board

Opening Prayer

tending the fertile ground of the heart

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love

Catholic Character Themes: Community, Discipleship, Reverence, Stewardship

INTRODUCTION

Good morning, and welcome to our prayer service to begin this day of professional activity. The theme for our prayer this morning is *tending the fertile ground of the heart*. 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 PRAYER

Lord, as we pause to pray this morning, we ask you refresh our hearts and minds with the power of your Son's Good News. Bless our gathering today, that it might help us better serve the needs of all students in our Catholic schools. We ask you this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us listen to God's word.

READING (Mk. 4, 26-34)

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew:

Jesus told the people a parable, "The Kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, without the sower knowing how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain on the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

(pause)

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

The hearts of our children and youth are like fertile fields, planted at baptism with the seeds of God's Kingdom. Each has a unique role in the body of believers and a glorious destiny in Christ. The mystery of what we will become is likened to the mustard seed that starts out small and grows beyond all expectations.

We share the privilege of tending the fertile ground of young hearts along their journey to eternity. We strive to model Christ's kindness, forgiveness and compassion, knowing that a living faith speaks far greater volumes than words. We point students beyond ourselves to the Source of all knowledge – to deepen their roots as they learn.

We marvel at what God has chosen to accomplish in us as we educate in the light of faith. Like a vast field of seeds at various stages caressed by the holy wind of the Spirit, we support and shelter one another on our journey to fullness of life. The harvest belongs to God, and we, together with parents and

the faith community are its labourers. May God give us eyes to see the greatness of our task, and the courage to persevere, tending the fertile ground of young hearts.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

For the Church, that all who share a common baptism might come to fully embrace their call to spread the Gospel with their lives. We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For the world, that leaders of all nations will seek an end to conflict build peace among all God's children. We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those who suffer in our classrooms, communities and homes, that they may find comfort in our attentiveness to their needs. We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For ourselves, that we might find ways to support one another as we seek to meet the challenges of Catholic education in a post-Christian culture. We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For our personal intentions,.... We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us unite our prayers with one voice using the words that Jesus gave us: ***Our Father...***

CLOSING PRAYER

Please join together in praying our **Prayer for Our Vision:**

God our Father,
You inspire us through a heritage that is rich in blessings,
You challenge us to grow, as we remember the struggles of our past,
You call us as partners in the Catholic educational community
To be inclusive of all who seek to learn in the light of faith.

Grant that your Holy Spirit might continue to guide us
So that by the power of Your grace,
Our share in the Church's mission
To spread the Good News of Jesus
May be relevant in the world today,
And point to a future that is filled with hope.

We ask you to bless our work,
That it may serve to protect, nurture and rightly guide
In the Catholic faith
Those children You have entrusted to our care,
To the glory of Your name.

We make this prayer
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

