



Walking Forward Together
Liturgy of the Word
for Leaders in our
Catholic Educational Community



CATHOLIC EDUCATION:
WALKING
forward
together

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. The theme for our prayer this morning is, “Walking Forward Together,” taken from the Canadian Bishops’ 2016 response to Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report. In this response, our bishops expressed their commitment to, “continue to walk together with Indigenous Peoples in building a more just society where their gifts and those of all people are nurtured and honoured.”* We are here this morning in that same spirit, to walk forward together, honouring the gifts each of us brings to the mission of our Catholic schools, convinced of their important role in building a more just society. As we begin this important time of dialogue in our Catholic educational community, let us turn to God in prayer and ask His blessing on our activities and discussions today and beyond.

*(A Catholic Response to Call to Action 48 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. CCCB, 2017. P. 7)

OPENING SONG

Please join in our opening song,
(Sugg., *We are Called*, by David Haas, vv 1-2)



CLOSING PRAYER

We praise and thank you, O Lord. For in Christ, You have enriched us with blessings beyond measure as living stones to build up His body in love. Grant that today’s gathering might quicken our resolve to walk forward together in the unity of Your Spirit for the good of our Catholic schools, to the glory of Your Name. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus the Lord.

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

May Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen



CLOSING SONG

Please join in our closing song,
(Sugg. *We are Called*, v. 3)

3. Let us pray for all those who suffer, especially those living in isolation due to differences in culture, economic status, to infirmity as well as those persecuted for their Christian faith. For their consolation and our willingness to reach out to them in their needs.
We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.
4. Let us pray for our families, parishes, schools. That their members will be renewed in faith, hope, and love, to walk forward together in their shared mission to hand on the faith of Christ and His Church.
We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.
5. For our own intentions, held in the silence of our hearts.
We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

And now, let us unite our prayers with Jesus' constant prayer before the Father on our behalf, with one voice, using the words He gave us:
Our Father...



OPENING 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.

And let us pray. O God our Father, You created and endowed each of us in Christ with gifts to serve the Body of believers in love. Open our hearts to welcome the gifts each of us brings, our ears to listen attentively to one another's words, and our minds to discern your Spirit's wisdom at work in our midst. We make this prayer to You in the name of Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

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

READING

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians
(Eph 4: 1-7, 11-16)

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets and teachers, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

The word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADERSHIP

... it is obvious that the responsibility for ensuring the integrity of Catholic education does not and cannot rest solely on the shoulders of a few individuals, or belong only to certain groups of people with specific administrative duties. Certainly, there is a rich variety of roles and responsibilities within our school system. But even as we acknowledge this diversity, we must also recognize the interdependence of all members of the Catholic education community. We are bound together by a common faith and in a common service.

Leadership of our schools, in this sense, belongs to all. ... each person has significant contribution to make:

- in creating a school environment that reflects the value and dignity of each individual;
- in striving to fulfill the responsibilities of his or her role in a conscientious and wholehearted manner;
- in cooperating with one another out of a spirit of mutual respect as sisters and brothers in Christ;
- in recognizing the power of day-to-day personal encounter as a witness to faith;
- in communicating the joy and hope of our Catholic faith.

We all know from past experience that we cannot give what we do not have. Shared responsibility for the Catholic schools is little more than words without an awareness of the need for personal transformation and attention to our own spiritual growth. Whatever our age and our role, we are called to a process of maturation and integration in our life of faith. Some of the marks of this life, we believe, are the following: a personal relationship with the Father through his Son, Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us; a conscious obedience to God's will as it manifests itself in daily life; a mature grasp of the teaching of the Church; active participation in the life of the Christian community; an awareness of biblical revelation; respect for Church tradition and authority; an option for the poor in our midst; continual hope and optimism for seeing Christ as the way, the truth and the life (cf. John 14:6); a moderate use of the material blessings of life and sensitivity to the genuine needs of others; a critical stance in regard to the modern media; reverence for the environment around us; the desire to be a man or woman for others; a deep conviction that the importance of this life is that it leads to and prepares us for the life to come.

This may seem to be somewhat overwhelming, a rather daunting vocation, and indeed it is. But we need to be convinced of the grace of our calling, and believe that through all our struggles, God is ever at our side. For as St. Paul says so reassuringly, we "can do all things in God who strengthens us" (cf. Philippians 4:13).

(OCCB, *Fulfilling the Promise: The Challenge of Leadership. A Pastoral Letter to the Catholic Educational Community*, 1993. Pp 8-9)



PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

1. Let us pray for the Church. That all who share a common baptism might embrace more fully their call to walk forward together, exercising the gifts our Lord has bestowed, in loving service, in the unity of the Spirit, to build up the body of Christ.
We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.
2. Let us pray for the world. That all God's children will lay aside their differences and earnestly seek the peace and unity for which they were created, bearing with one another in love.
We pray to the Lord. Lord, hear our prayer.

