

## ***Catholic Education: Rejoicing in Hope***

Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love

Catholic Character Themes: Community, Discipleship, Reverence, Solidarity

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to our prayer service to celebrate the gifts of joy and hope in our Catholic schools. With great joy and hope, let us begin our prayer in song.

### **OPENING SONG**

Please join in singing, (sugg.) *Something Which is Known*, No. 393 CBW III

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Let us begin our prayer, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pray. God our Father, by our Baptism, You have given us a share in the life of the Risen Christ. We rejoice in the hope of the resurrection, and all that it promises for our lives. Fill us with the power of Your Spirit, so that we might better praise You for Your gifts of joy and hope. We make this prayer to You through this same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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

### **READING**

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians

(Phil 4: 4-5, 9)

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

### **REFLECTION**

The apostle Paul was once a person with a hardened heart. One day, Jesus came into his life and changed everything. Little by little, Paul became full of joy and hope. Jesus had saved him, and changed his life forever. He had to tell everyone the Good News of what God the Father had done for us through Jesus.

St. Paul tells us to rejoice – to rejoice in the hope that comes from the risen Jesus. Not even death could hold Jesus back from rising to new life. And Jesus himself has promised to be with us always, and to raise us up with Him, if we trust and follow Him. This is our great hope, and our great joy.

So, what does rejoicing in hope look like in our Catholic schools?

It is a primary teacher and students singing with all their heart;

It is an EA's smile of pride at a student who has worked hard and now understands;

It is the gladness of belonging that comes when the secretary says, "hello," to you by name;

It is the exuberance of play on the gymnasium floor;

It is the choir that makes a school Mass come alive;

It is parents' pride at their children's first communion;

It is the Pastor whose joy and laughter light up a staffroom;  
It is the caretaker who takes a student helper under their wing;  
It is prayer, it is play, it is learning, it is friendship, singing and dance;  
It is commitment to justice...

It is Jesus – alive in the power of the Holy Spirit in our schools.  
He is our great joy – the reason for everything we do.  
Risen and walking with us on our journey, present as we gather to learn in His name.  
Together in Him, we rejoice in hope!

### **PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL**

The response to our petitions is: *Source of all joy and hope, Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for the Church. That all who have a share in Christ's mystical body may find strength, joy and hope in Him who has overcome all evil. We pray...  
*Source of all joy and hope, Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for the world. That all God's children will nurture the seeds of joy and hope planted by their Creator in their hearts and become makers of peace. We pray...  
*Source of all joy and hope, Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for all who suffer in our world and communities. That their joy and hope might be rekindled by compassionate hands reaching out to them in their need. We pray...  
*Source of all joy and hope, Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for our Catholic schools. That their share in the Church's mission to spread the Good News of Jesus might be renewed by a new outpouring of joy and hope from the Holy Spirit. We pray...  
*Source of all joy and hope, Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for ourselves. That we who are involved in Catholic education as students, staff, parents, Pastors and Trustees might experience more fully the joy and hope of Christ in our lives. We pray...  
*Source of all joy and hope, Lord, hear our prayer.*

For our own intentions... We pray...  
*Source of all joy and hope, Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us gather our prayers spoken aloud and those remaining in our hearts and unite them with the prayer of Jesus, using the words he taught us: ***Our Father...***

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Lord our God, we thank You for the gift of Catholic education. May Your Spirit's gifts of joy and hope be present in everything we do in our Catholic schools. May these gifts grow in our hearts until that day when our joy and hope are fulfilled in Your eternal Presence. We ask you this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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

### **CLOSING SONG:**

Please join in our closing song: (sugg.) *You are the Voice* (No. 56 CBWIII)