



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

May 7, 2018
Catholic Education Week

Dear Friends,

The theme of this year's Catholic Education Week is also the name of the newest pastoral letter from the Bishops of Ontario regarding Catholic Schools: *Renewing the Promise*.

The letter *Renewing the Promise* represents the culmination of a province-wide consultation and reflection on the signs of the times and the call of the Lord regarding the ongoing gift of publicly funded Catholic Education in Ontario. Along with many priests, teachers, students, trustees and other staff, I also participated in many of these reflective sessions. What a joy it is to gather with such faith-filled, enthusiastic, caring individuals who, all in their own way and according to their own gifts, are living out the promise upon which the Catholic Education system was founded centuries ago!

As we celebrate this week under this 'banner' of *Renewing the Promise* let us consider what this means in terms of where we have come from. In Ontario, Catholic Education began as a promise 180 years ago – even before Canada was a country! Religious men and women wanting to fulfill their own promise of handing on the Gospel gave hope to new generations by teaching them to read and write in order to prepare them for the challenges of life. Despite the changing society in which we live and the challenges we face in every generation more and more men and women - religious, clergy, and lay people - have made the very same promise.

A promise is an assurance that you will do what you say you will. The promise to pass on the treasure of our faith to the next generation and to accompany them on their journey continues today in our publicly funded Catholic schools in Ontario. Over the last 180 years, the task of education has become much more complex. New technologies, changing social structures, cultural pressures, and our ever increasing awareness of global disasters present both challenges and opportunities for educators. Our Catholic Schools have never been so involved in witnessing locally and globally to our gospel values.

In this week of celebration of our Catholic school systems, I encourage each of us to renew our promise. Let each of us give an assurance that no matter what our role is, either parent or student, or teacher or trustee, or pastor or administrator or community partner, we will do what we have said we will. We will support and work in and with our Catholic schools passing on the faith that has been handed on to us.

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Renewing the promise means knowing the Gospel, living the Gospel, and proclaiming the Gospel by our lives. May we celebrate well in this week remembering those who first made the courageous promise, grateful for those who today remain faithful to it, and emboldened to be the ones to carry that promise forward in the years to come.

With gratitude for our past and hope for our future, I entrust us all to the care of Mary, Mother of the Church,

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

+Douglas Crosby, OMI

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton

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