



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

April 27, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At a news conference yesterday, Minister of Education Stephen Lecce announced that schools will remain closed until at least May 31, 2020. The extension, based on expert advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the COVID-19 Command Table, will permit updated modelling and data to inform the province's next steps in the fight against COVID-19.

This extended closure will mean a continuation of parent-supported and teacher-directed distance learning. We are now into the fourth week of Phase II Learn at Home and have been tremendously encouraged by the learning that is taking place, as reported by our teachers and attested by our tracking metrics. While our teachers and support staff have been actively engaging with their students and families, much of the good work is due to the very considerable role that our parents continue to play in their children's home learning. We are extremely grateful to you for your understanding and support as the school closure continues to not only place greater demands on your time, but test and try your own technological knowledge and limits. We know that the current reality does not replace the traditional classroom, nor do we expect parents to replace our teachers, but we appreciate that you and your families are doing your very best to support and sustain the learning environment during the school closure.

Our goal during this time is that all students will be able to successfully complete their school year. To this end, we acknowledge and commend the efforts and true goodness of our principals, vice-principals, teachers and support staff who have worked tirelessly over the past several weeks to address the myriad of student needs, develop online learning resources, ensure that all students and families have equitable access to digital learning, and maintain a Catholic learning environment.

While learning continues, we regret to inform you that school events will not. Due to uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic and the return to school, the HWCDSB has made the decision to cancel all large gatherings and school events for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. This includes sacramental celebrations, graduations and proms. Principals will be consulting with students/families in the coming weeks regarding the possibility of celebrating these events at a later date or in a different manner.

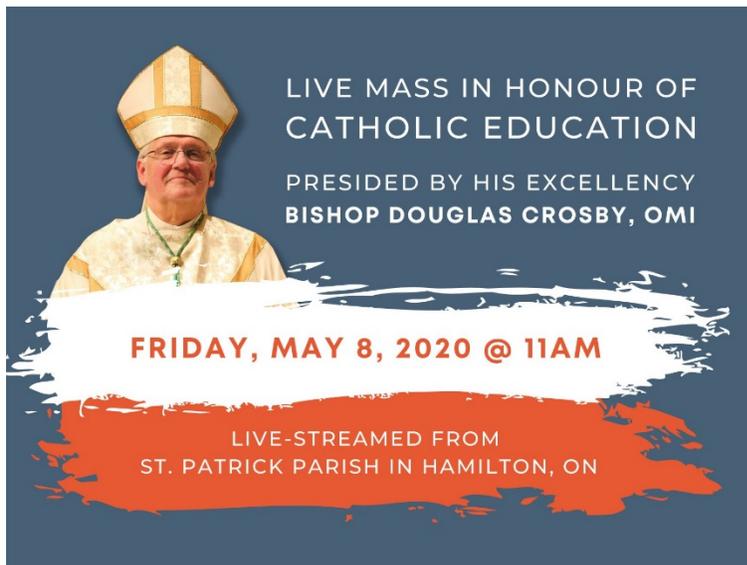
Despite the shutdown, faith formation remains a priority of our students' learning. In addition to a variety of Religious Education resources on the myClass platform, there are a number of other activities that students can enjoy with their families. This Friday, May 1 marks the Consecration of Canadian Churches to Mary, Mother of the Church. The Consecration, celebrated locally by Bishop Crosby, seeks the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary during the coronavirus

pandemic. Families are invited to offer prayer intentions to our Blessed Mother Mary for all those in our community, province and world who have been impacted by the pandemic.

On May 3-8, the HWCDSB will also be celebrating Catholic Education Week, a week when Catholic school boards across Ontario traditionally reflect on and give thanks to God for the precious gift of publicly funded Catholic education. This year's theme, "Catholic Education: Igniting Hope," is always appropriate but particularly this year when we, as Christians, are called to bring light and hope to our families, parish and school communities and world. We invite parents to speak with their children about the daily themes and reflect on the many examples of hope in our own lives.

- Monday, May 4: Our Hope in Christ
- Tuesday, May 5: The Hope Within Us
- Wednesday, May 6: The Hope Among Us
- Thursday, May 7: Hope for the World
- Friday, May 8: A Future Full of Hope

We also encourage our students and families to join our schools and staff in a Diocesan Catholic Education Week Mass, celebrated online by Bishop Crosby on Friday, May 8, 2020 at 11:00 a.m.



LIVE MASS IN HONOUR OF
CATHOLIC EDUCATION
PRESIDED BY HIS EXCELLENCY
BISHOP DOUGLAS CROSBY, OMI

FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2020 @ 11AM

LIVE-STREAMED FROM
ST. PATRICK PARISH IN HAMILTON, ON



IGNITING
HOPE
CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK
MAY 3 - MAY 8, 2020



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In closing, please know that you and your families remain in our thoughts and prayers. We realize that these unusual circumstances have not only placed much pressure on students and their families and led to sudden changes in your daily routines but have required you to develop new skills. All these things require reflection and the faithful (re)alignment of our thinking. These can be, and are, days of renewed worship, rededicated service, care, friendship, work, community and love.

During this month in which we honour our Blessed Mother, we remember that the true hope, centred on the person of her son Jesus, is never in vain and we look forward to the time in the future when we can join again in our school and parish communities.

Keep well and stay safe,



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen
Director of Education