



**OAPCE**  
FOUNDED IN 1939

THE ONTARIO  
ASSOCIATION OF PARENTS  
IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION



We are the voice of parents and guardians of children enrolled in the Publicly-funded Catholic System of Education in the Province of Ontario

# Spring Newsletter

2009



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Dear Parents in Catholic Education,



We are only 2 weeks away from the conclusion of our "Journey to the 70th"! Parents in Catholic Education will gather in Toronto the weekend of May 22-23-24 at Father John Redmond Catholic School to celebrate, dialogue and plan for the next 70 years of OAPCE being the "provincial voice of publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario". Will you, your school council, your regional or board be represented?

There is still time to register and attend.

This is our story, this is your story - 70 years of "Engaged Parents" in Catholic education. Plan now to attend and be part of Ontario's Catholic education history!

Many long hours, days, weeks, and months have gone into the planning of this unique celebration in our Catholic education history. The time spent in planning and work being completed is by parent volunteers like yourselves. This is the only Catholic provincial parent conference in Ontario and is unique to our system.

Your attendance on the weekend of May 22, 23, and 24 is a visible sign of your commitment to publicly funded Catholic

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schools and parental involvement. But it is also a sign of recognition and thanks to the organizers of the conference, many of whom are parents from the Toronto Association of Parents in Catholic Education (TAPCE), our co-hosts this year.

I look forward to welcoming you in the opening session on Friday, May 22nd!

Brian Evoy  
President



## The Stranger on the Road - Deacon Leo Vanderkooy

We are still in the Easter Season. The Emmaus story is our story. The two disciples, while disappointed and discouraged, were going through moments of darkness and loneliness. Everything they believed had gone down the tubes. There are times in our lives that we experience the same sense of hopelessness and the same feelings. It is at such times when

Jesus is closest to us, though we may not see him, much like the disciples. "While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him." (Luke 24:15, 16)

First the disciples had to see the cross as a necessary piece in the picture, part of the set purpose and God's plan. That's why Jesus opened the scriptures for them: "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets", (Luke 24:27). "Were not our hearts burning within us (Luke 24:32) and at the breaking of the break; Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus." (Luke 24:31)

The Risen Jesus, unrecognizable in human form on the road to Emmaus, and in so many situations we find ourselves in through life, becomes real and recognizable through the breaking of the bread. And the disciples had to share this good news with the others and returned to Jerusalem.

The Emmaus story may well have been the first Eucharistic celebration since the last supper: Breaking open the word; breaking of the bread; going forth to share the good news with others. In so many ways, the Risen Christ is among us; in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, the Eucharist, in the love, charity and goodness of others, in the moments of grace and prayer, we do not always realize it. He is present in our children; when a child is born don't we often say: "it's a Miracle!"

We are not always aware of the ways in which we can be other Christ's to our children in particular and all the people we come in contact with. He asks us, "Do you know the persons beside you, know the struggles they go through and are you there for them?" "Do you recognize the needs of those who are sick, never having someone to visit with them?"

Do we recognize a fellow worker going through some hard times and find ways of comforting him/her. In our daily living there is so much we can do, so many ways in which we can help, make life more comfortable and joyous for others as long as we put our faith in the Risen Jesus. We want to be close to Him all the time.

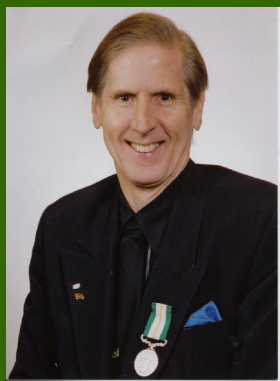
As the disciples in the Emmaus story, we too may not recognize Jesus in the world around us and be looking for him in the wrong places. As they were wondering, "what will happen now after Jesus is gone?" are we sometimes wondering the same about the Catholic Education in our Province? So often it is under attack and at every election it seems an issue whether it is worth to have a separate Catholic System. Are we prepared to defend our system? The answer lies primarily in our families. After seventy years, our Association is stronger than ever, but we need the support of all parents and their families. We need to teach our children the importance of our faith and the connections between Families, Schools and parish. We take on that responsibility at the time we have our children baptized. We know from Matthew's Gospel what Jesus told his disciples: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28: 19, 20) This task was not just given to the disciples or subsequently to Bishops, Priests and Deacons, but to each and every one of us; especially us, parents, who are the first and primary educators of our children. It is sad and it happens too often, when one comes across eight, nine or ten year olds, from Catholic Families, who don't know how to make the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father or Hail Mary. Is Jesus the stranger on their road through life? We as parents have a responsibility to "teach them", as Jesus told us to.

Our Association, our publicly funded catholic schools, as we celebrate the seventieth anniversary, need you, the parents and all involved in catholic education, more than ever before. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, are we looking for Jesus, are we looking in the right places? If we have not found Him, we can: Open our ears and we will hear him in the words of scripture, open our eyes and find and recognize Him in the breaking of the bread. Our hearts might even sense an inner warmth, a burning, as we experience Jesus in the Word and the Eucharistic Bread.

This is probably my last message in my capacity as Spiritual Director of the Association as I am resigning from the Board as of June 1st of this year. For the last ten years I have enjoyed working with all of you and learned a lot about Catholic Education in Ontario. We have an association stronger than ever, but a lot of work still needs to be done. We have many very committed volunteers who do anything they can for our children in education and all of their efforts, as worthwhile as they are, need the support of all parents who have children in the publicly funded catholic system. Without your support it will not work. I will pray for the success of all the work done by them and you, the parents.

Let us open our hearts this Easter Season and welcome the people who surround us, for that's where Jesus has chosen us to be and that's where we will find Him. And finally we can open our mouths to proclaim the good news, Jesus is Risen and is in our midst: "The two then explained to them what happened on the road, and how they recognized the Lord when he broke the bread." (Luke 24:35)

God blesses us all!



## Dr. Ash's Corner

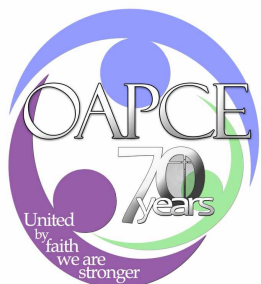
### - Odyssey to Thunder Bay

As I gazed through the slightly frosted plane window my eyes were treated to a veritable feast of sparkling lights below and glittering stars above. I was landing in Thunder Bay to keynote at the OAPCE Parent Forum celebrating the 70th anniversary. As I deplaned for my initial visit to this jewel of the north, the chill of the evening was accompanied by an unusual sense of tranquility.

[click here](#) for the full article.

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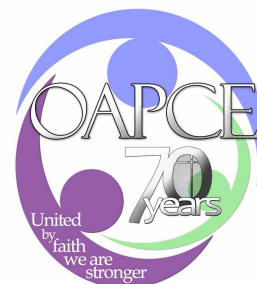
The conference is generously supported this year through the Parents Reaching Out Grant program from the Ministry of Education, Parent Engagement Office. We thank them for their continued support of events like ours showcasing parents helping parents!



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