



## BISHOP OF HAMILTON

### **BISHOP CROSBY'S MESSAGE FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK MAY 2-6, 2011**

Dear Supporters of Catholic Education,

Catholic Education Week is an occasion for us to acknowledge and celebrate the excellence of our Catholic educational institutions at all levels. We are justly proud of what has been achieved and note how the broader community also looks to us as a valued component in the ongoing struggle against ignorance, prejudice and phobias of various kinds. We know how education raises people up from poverty, from indignity, from an aimless and directionless manner of life. It imparts confidence, self-respect and hope, that hope which Pope Benedict so admirably describes for us in his Encyclical “*Spe Salvi*”.

In our joy we must always recall that ‘we stand on the shoulders of giants’. Catholic Education is the fruit of much historical sacrifice and dedication on the part of our forebears in the Ontario Catholic Community. We think of the humble beginnings of the school system in our Province: the selfless commitment and zeal of those early pioneers in the field, the succession of visionary Bishops, the female and male Religious, the laymen and women who rightly looked upon teaching as a vocation and a high calling which is essentially oblation in nature. They knew what it meant to prepare young people to become not just good citizens but leaders in Canadian society. Immigrant parents from many countries understood that, for their children to thrive and succeed in a new land, they must be equipped with the skills of literacy, numeracy and a sense of sound moral values. The commitment of the Church to Education throughout the centuries and in all nations has been based on the desire to impart the “*scientias et virtutes*”: not just the very best practices and highest standards in the various disciplines of academic study – the “*sciences*”, but also a rounded formation of the whole person illuminated by Faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the Christian virtues or “*virtutes*”.

In today’s very diverse and multicultural social context there are those who, mistakenly in my view, contend that adherence to certain Christian virtues is somehow old-fashioned or even alien to contemporary secular sensibilities. The virtue of chastity is a case in point. For this reason the Bishops of Canada have reminded all Catholics of the enduring and unchanging teaching of the Gospel as to the meaning of human sexuality. Let everyone know that all Christians, married or single, young or old, whatever their condition of life, are called to respect and live out the virtue of chastity. We are only too aware of our humanity and our frailty: in the words of St. Paul “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak”. Catholics know the place of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the life of each believer and find solace in the forgiveness which is celebrated in that interface between Christian expectation and our own limitations and failures.

As we look not just to the past but into the future, let us resolve to remain faithful to the “Traditio Fidei” – the handing on of the Faith – which underpins our system of schooling and our whole self-understanding as forward-looking, educated Roman Catholics and leaders in the mainstream of Canadian life.

I take the occasion to encourage each one of you in your efforts to build up the Kingdom of God here in our beloved Diocese and I am grateful to be working closely with all who are engaged in the promotion and enhancement of Catholic Education.

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "+ Douglas Crosby OMI". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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