



# CSCO End of the School Year News Letter

CHAPLAINS' REFLECTIONS OF 2018

## It's Awesome to Be a Chaplain!

by Fr. Andrij Figol (Chaplain at Corpus Christi C.S.S. in Burlington)

I often ponder on how wonderful it is to be living in a province that supports Catholic education. Even though we hear rumblings of pressures on the government to merge the systems, and questioning the purpose of a Catholic school system in today's world, I take it as an ongoing challenge to not fall to contentment with our mission as a Church and chaplaincy leaders, and a challenge to grow in faith, in skill, in wisdom.

I realize that these conversations, news articles and opinions stir in me fear and panic. "Oh no, is it really possible," that what happened in my home town of Montreal a few decades ago will happen here as well?! When I notice it, I face the panic. How? By recognizing it, naming it and halting the doom talk; at times, figuratively taking a step back and taking a deep breath (a few times). When the heat of panic and fear are at bay, then I can pray, reflect, look for God's presence. What is God showing me here, what am I to learn from this? And most often, I become overtaken with the sense that the learning is not so much about the world, the

outside stuff, as much as it is about me, my inside stuff.

What that means to me is that the world will always present challenges, and I can dismiss them by saying how evil and bad the government is, how terrible power-hungry-godless-people are, how much injustice there is in the world and we are being persecuted. Or, I can take these challenges as experiences to grow deeper in understanding the mystery of life!

Chaplaincy and ministry invite us to self-reflection, to take a step back and to look for what is real. What is the raw honesty about who we are, what is most important?; what is the meaning and purpose of this moment?; what emotions are we feeling and what are they triggering?; how is God present in our lives here and now? And this is where I find that faith becomes alive.



Having the opportunity to do this daily, and to 'meet' others - staff and students, both Catholic and non-Catholic - wherever they may be in their journey of discovery, to walk together, to laugh, to face the troubles of life, to find consolation, is a privilege and an honor that may be life-changing if not life-saving for some.

For many who do not understand and deny the impact of Chaplaincy in the school setting, this may seem unnecessary. And for us, who are working in His vineyard, it is essential. With that in mind let us be grateful for this position, let us be steadfast in faith, let us not give into temptation and above all let us grow in wisdom and understanding.

May the Good Lord reward you a hundredfold for the good work you do.

## Be an Angel

by Linda Izzo (Chaplain at Marshall McLuhan C.S.S. in Toronto)

Here's the link to our school's Lenten charitable campaign now featured in The Catholic Register:

<https://www.catholicregister.org/item/27459-be-an-angel-project-offers-a-little-taste-of-humanity-for-most-vulnerable-patients>

We are humbled by the attention this campaign has attracted and hope seeds were planted to continue the advocacy for our homeless brothers and sisters.

Take care!

## Walking Humbly

by Andrew Hall (Chaplain at St. John's College in Brantford)

2017-18 was a great year for me as chaplain at St. John's College in Brantford. This year our theme was "Walk Humbly" from Micah 6:8. Therefore, a real effort was made in campus ministry to connect with this year's theme. Our campus ministry group decided that since our theme was "Walk Humbly", we had to walk somewhere and do something that involved living out our faith. During semester one, we did a pilgrimage to St. Vincent de Paul and volunteered there for the day. We also presented St. Vincent de Paul with the \$500.00 we won at the Faith Challenge Games earlier in the school year. During semester two, we did another pilgrimage, this time to St. Andrew's Soup for the Soul. Students had the chance to serve lunch to the homeless and those in need. It was great to see students put their faith into action and truly connect with or board theme.

Another highlight for me was taking the junior and senior worship band from St. John's College to record original worship songs that they wrote themselves. It was awesome to see the students in a professional studio, seeing their prayer/song come to life in a studio and taking it with them to share with their friends and school community.

### Love the Lord

The senior worship band from my school recorded a live off the floor version of an original song they wrote. Here is the link if you want to check it out.

<https://sjcseniorworshipband.bandcamp.com/album/love-the-lord>

## Lunch Time

by Patrick Marcolla (Chaplain at St. Roch C.S.S. in Brampton)

Lunch time is the busiest time of the day for a Chaplain, I think.

Since October, a regular group has formed in my office, mostly girls (one boy), and others that come and go or come and stay.

But it's this core group of girls (about 6 or 7) that has formed this special community in the Chaplain's office. Real conversations, no holds barred, and sometimes I'm included, sometimes they pretend I'm not listening. Sometimes, I do to.

But grace has funny ways of manifesting itself, moving freely, freely given.

And there's one conversation I keep coming back to, earlier in the year. We were talking about family, and one girl, defenses down, said simply, "I wish I had a father in my life." And one by one, almost every girl there agreed by quietly nodding their heads or saying the same thing.

And there I sit, a male Chaplain in an office with a group of girls seeking a father. Seeking *The Father*.

And it's there that I feel most unworthy, and most grateful. I say a quiet word of thanks and the real conversation begins.

Grace. Moving freely, freely given.

Amen.

## CFOTAE (FORUM) Announcement

by John Quinn

I am sorry to announce that the **Canadian Forum on Theology and Education** 2018 has been cancelled and **will not happen again**

The Canadian Forum on Theology and Education ([www.cfotae.ca](http://www.cfotae.ca)) is a successor to High School Forum that was started in 1979 by myself, Alan Green and Wayne Debly CR.

High School Forum was focused on religious education teachers and chaplains in Catholic secondary schools and annually offered 3-day workshops that offered theological renewal along with pedagogical suggestions.

The presenters in 1979 were my dear friend Wilf Murchland CSC (RIP), who had worked at NORE where he had done a research project on "Adolescent Catechesis in Canada" and Ernie

Nedder, national consultant for WC Brown and Company whose texts were in use in many Catholic secondary schools in Ontario. For the next fourteen years Forum presented as many as six workshops a year. Some of those presenters were Richard Reichert, Mary Malone, Tom Zanzig, Alyson Huntly and Marsha Sfeir, James DiGiacomo SJ, Mark Link SJ, Mary Boys SNJM, Gabe Moran, Regina Coll CSJ & Joanmarie Smith CSJ, Bill and Patty Coleman, Dick Westley, Michael Warren, Andre Guindon OMI, Frank Morrissey OMI, John Pungente SJ, Paul Hansen CSSR, Joan Cronin CSIC, Ted Schmidt, Michael Czerny SJ, Cathy Pead and Richard Shields. From a little further afield we had, Albert Nolan OP from South Africa, Graham Rossiter CFC from Australia and Dermot Lane from Ireland.



In 2000, at the request of many teachers who were then attending **When Faith Meets Pedagogy** I restarted High School Forum and soon after it became the **Canadian Forum on Theology and Education**. This year (2018), there were not enough registered for Tina Beattie, whom I was bringing from England along with CSCO's own Cathy Cavanagh so I cancelled Forum and any future Forums.

Since restarting Forum our presenters have included, Heather Eaton and Michael Moorwood (Australia), Diarmuid O'Murchu MSC(Ireland), John Dear SJ, Roy Bourgeois MM, Christine Schenk CSJ, Paul Lakeland, Michael Higgins, Michael Crosby OFM, Margaret Guider OSF, Joan Chittister OSB and Teresa Forcades OSB (Catalonia) Despite a plethora of requests to continue Forum I am content with my decision. As a dear friend, Ted Schmidt remarked, "an end of an era." I wish to thank all who supported Forum over the years including the many who shared their reflections on its personal and professional value.



# A Year in Review

by Cosmo and Damiano Femia  
(Chaplains at Loretto Abbey C.S.S. in  
Toronto)

Dear CSCO members,

This year the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary had one of our most successful years yet! We kicked the year off with our annual Pasta Night fundraiser on November 16, 2018. Under the direction of our teacher moderators, Mr. C. Femia, Mr. D. Femia, and Mrs. J. Bissonnette, we raised a record breaking \$10 000 for our school charity! All money raised will be going towards building AIDS Clinics and water pumps in Tanzania. Without the extensive preparation by our Presidents, exec team and teacher moderators, as well as the continuous support of our school community we would not have been able to accomplish this milestone. Without our incredible staff and students we would not have been able to pull this off. Throughout the year our girls have participated in various events such as Ordinandi, the Peace Walk, and, arguably the most inspiring, St. Francis Table.



Every month Loretto Abbey sends 10 students to participate in the St. Francis table. Students travel to impoverished areas of Toronto to help the needy. Students help to prepare food, set up, serve, and clean up. As per the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary's club motto, "We are the servants of the poor", we have strived to live by this and do God's work on earth. St. Francis table instills the morals of respect and acceptance, that we should not marginalize the poor, but rather welcome them to break bread as Jesus did.

This year, DIHM also worked towards raising funds and collecting supplies for the Dominican Republic. We began our "Backpacks for the Dominican" campaign where we collected backpacks, school supplies, clothes, toiletries and other necessities. We are pleased to announce we filled 29 backpacks with supplies! We also hosted a BBQ to raise money to send medical supplies and personnel to the Dominican. We are pleased to announce that the Daughters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary will be donating \$1500 to this cause!

This past school year has been absolutely incredible and would not have been possible without the undying support of Mr. C. Femia, Mr. D. Femia, Mrs. J. Bissonnette, our wonderful staff and our administrators. Thank you for always believing in us and supporting our endeavours. We would also like to thank our Exec Team of DIHM for their hard work and involvement in this club. Without the support of our fellow students DIHM would not be the club that it is.



On behalf of our 2017-2018 DIHM Presidents- Sabrina Caramico, Victoria Mae Llano, Victoria Marinelli, and Sarah Mattacchione- thank you for making our last year at the Abbey a memorable one.

Sincerely,  
A. Bartolini (Principle)  
C. Femia (Teacher Moderator/Chaplain)  
D. Femia (Teacher Moderator/Chaplain)



# Walking Humbly

by Margaret Palmer (System Chaplaincy Leader at St. Clair District School Board)

Our school board is re-naming its meeting rooms at the CEC to celebrate its rich heritage. Each room will have a poster with the Patron Saint, a prayer to use during meetings, an explanation of the name choice and most of them have student/ staff artwork. (The original artwork is staying in the school with the picture being in the CEC). I was delighted to help with this. Here are 3 samples. Such good fun!!! It was a productive year and a wonder-filled one.

The St. Patrick Room is dedicated to honour the only Catholic high school in Sarnia/Lambton. The patrons, St. Christopher and St. Patrick, honour both Sarnia area Catholic High schools in our Board's history.



*Picture 1: St. Patrick by R. Clark from St. Joseph School, Corunna*

*Picture 2: St. Patrick by C. Cox from Ursuline College Chatham*

This room is dedicated to honour Mother Mary Xavier Le Bihan who came from France. She started The Ursuline Sisters of Chatham, who founded many Catholic Elementary schools in Chatham Kent as well as Ursuline College Chatham.



*Picture one: K Biscope is a student at Ursuline College Chatham. Picture Two: Ms. Lacina and her craft class at UCC made the stained glass art*

## Prayer to St. Patrick and St. Christopher

Beloved Jesus,  
we trust in our work today that  
God's strength will pilot us  
God's might will uphold us,  
God's wisdom will guide us,  
God's eye will look before us,  
God's ear will hear us,  
God's word will speak to us,  
And God's hand will guard us.  
St. Patrick and St. Christopher,  
pray for us as we walk together  
in Christ's light  
with our families and parishes.  
Amen.

## Prayer to St. Angela Merici and Mother Mary Xavier

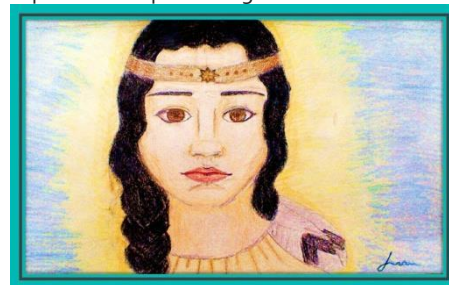
Holy and Abiding Spirit,  
we call your blessing on all our schools. We thank you for St. Angela Merici, foundress of the Ursuline Sisters, who inspired Mother Mary Xavier, foundress of Ursuline Sisters of the Chatham Union. Like on the feast of Pentecost, when You equipped many to speak the Good News, the many founders of Catholic schools have shared the Gospel and left a widespread legacy. St. Angela Merici and Mother Mary Xavier, pray

for us. May we continue your work as partners in the formation of life-long learners through living our faith, promoting educational achievement and innovation, and fostering stewardship, leadership and social justice.  
Amen.

## Prayer to St. Kateri Tekakwitha

Loving Creator,  
may we be inspired by St. Kateri's love of creation and her love for Jesus. Through her patronage, may we choose words and deeds of friendship and reconciliation, with one another and the Earth. Following her example, may we be true to our baptismal call in all we do. St. Kateri, pray for us. as we work with young people. Following your example and ours, may they grow in their love of learning and their love of God. May they be blessed with courage and perseverance.  
Amen.

The St. Clair Room is named after Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River. With this name we honour the importance water in our lives- for survival and Catholic baptism. We also honour the Four First Nations communities within our board's region. First Nations recognize the sacredness of water, the interconnectedness of all life and the importance of protecting water.



*Artist: J Gunby, is a student from Holy Family School, Wallaceburg.*

# D.R.E.A.M.S.

by Don Hall (Chaplain at St. Mary C.S.S. in Hamilton)

*"My D.R.E.A.M.S. experience simply cannot be described through words or photographs, but through remembering what I have accomplished and how it has changed my life for the better. One week in the Dominican Republic allowed me to build a new home, relationships and long lasting memories for the rest of my life."*

~ Taylor Patrick

*"While in the Dominican Republic, you not only build a house, you build friendships. You not only mix concrete, you mix cultures. You not only lift bricks, you lift the hearts of others while they lift yours."*

~ Camryn Majander

Caitlin Kuder (a student who attended the DREAMS program) has kindly granted me permission to share an insightful paragraph that she wrote in her DREAMS application essay. "As a younger version of myself sat on the Guardian Angels gymnasium floor, intently following the stories brought to life by previous DREAMS participants, I knew that I wanted to experience the same wonderful aspects of the trip myself. Years have passed since then, but my desire to bring about change in the world burns on. Participating in a trip like DREAMS will allow me to live a life that extends beyond myself. It is by luck that I was born in a first world country, but it is by choice that I want to use my resources to help the less fortunate in the global south."

Caitlin reminds us that God is inviting us to be instruments of his love. In the process of being God's hands and feet reaching out to others in need, we are also loved in return.



## March for Life 2018

by Aaron Pellerin (Chaplain at St. Thomas Aquinas C.S.S. in London)

*[written for my staff faith blog]*

I'm freshly back from visiting our nation's capital and have been giving some thought to the Pro-Life cause that it is meant to champion.

The March for Life is an interesting event. It brings together thousands of people each year to walk together through the streets of Ottawa and declare to the world that we support a culture of life. There is a focus on primarily positive language in the speeches, posters, and signs used in the event. We hear messages of hope, of compassion, of a desire for a change. We walk happily, sometimes singing songs, rubbing shoulders with people from all walks of life. It is a good event.

The media portrayals of the March, however, always strike me as odd. Large media outlets like the CBC, CTV News, and Ottawa Citizen,

use terms in the negative wherever possible.

It is an "anti-abortion rally," and a clash between those who are anti-choice, and the pro-women protesters who call for an end to the March for Life. There are reports on the extent of the traffic disruptions, and on the controversy surrounding municipal politics and Pro-Life flags. There is no discussion of the issues either for or against. There is no meaningful dialogue with the parties involved.

How do we in our Catholic Schools deal with an issue like abortion? It is a divisive issue. In a culture that is post-Christian and slow to take firm stances on issues, we have a tendency to keep quiet. There is an appeal to saying "sure I'm Catholic, but..." when we run into contentious topics. We avoid topics like contraception, homosexuality, and abortion because they are hard, and we don't want to offend. If we can't talk about this at a deep level in our schools, if we can't have a careful well-intentioned discussion here, we are



really in trouble.



I spent a lot of years learning how to be a theologian. My particular focus is on systematic theology. I need to find ways to rationalize my beliefs and make all parts fit with the whole. Being Pro-Life isn't optional for me given what I know and believe about God. Supporting life and love and women's rights cannot be separated from my understanding of who God is (LOVE) and how we are meant to deal with other people (LOVE them). My need to reconcile the parts with the whole also says that even though I can't support abortion, I need to support those who have, or will have one. I need to be able to love them not just in spite of their choices but because of them. God doesn't ask us to judge or shame our neighbour in any translation of the Bible that I am aware of.

When we talk about abortion and the tough choices that some women need to make, we need to discuss what we can do to help. Women do not seek out abortion from a position of anger, but rather in a state of fear. Abortion clinics are not peopled by resolute advocates of bodily autonomy, but by the broken hearted who feel they have no other option. IF we are going to talk about being Pro-Life, then we must start by working to give options. As Catholics we firmly believe in the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable (Evangelii Gaudium #179). Who could possibly be more vulnerable than the unwanted unborn and her terrified mother?

Attending the March for Life and the youth conference on Friday, is an annual opportunity for me witness a moment of clarity for my students. I see it dawn on them over the course of our time together that there are things in our regular world that are dark and sad and painful, and that they happen whether or not we acknowledge them. During the march we see and hear vociferous objections from some angry people who feel strongly enough about their position to make signs and strain their voices letting us know that we are their enemy. I pray for them because their anger must be

rooted in something deep and painful. Theirs is not a chiefly logical argument. I find them much less unsettling, though, than the normal passersby, business suited, brief-cased, and focused on getting on with their day. Their calloused indifference to this issue so close to my heart makes me worry that our message falls on deaf ears. Moreover, it makes me wonder how often I am indifferent to injustice happening around me?

This is wordy and rambling, I suppose, but is an invitation to dialogue. Let's talk with our students and with each other about the values that we hold dear. It is not enough to announce that I am Pro-Life without also talking about the underlying values that make me so, or the responsibilities that I have because of them.

Peace, love, joy to you all!

## Ross Oakes

by Andria Bancheri (Chaplain at Philip Pocock C.S.S. in Mississauga)

Hi Everyone,

I just wanted to share a really amazing story from this past week regarding Ross Oakes. Some of you may have seen on the Pocock or my personal social media accounts that this last Friday during the PD Day, we had a small remembrance liturgy for Ross Oakes outside in our back field. The school was donated an oak tree which we dedicated to his remembrance and people took turns sharing stories about Ross. I have attached the picture to this email in case you haven't seen it.

I led the service, but I had never met Ross. Back in August when I was just moving into the office I was going through and cleaning out the storage room. In it I found a number of beautiful hand carved crosses with the initials JH on them and different years going from 2003-2007. I asked a bunch of staff members if they knew what they were or where they came from but could never find an answer. I decided to use these crosses as a part of our service to plant at the foot of the tree. When I spoke to the staff I told them that the crosses for my symbolized Ross. Coming into the position I always heard stories of Ross and people shared memories but because I had

never met him he was always a mystery, just like these crosses. It was like wearing a sweater from a second hand – you knew it was loved and cherished but you never really knew the full story of how it came to be at the store. Those crosses were the same – they were beautiful and I could see they meant something special to Ross because he collected them for years. Each cross was a little bit different, no two the same. But in the end as beautiful as they were, they were equally mysterious. That is what I said to the staff about Ross.

Anyways, this past weekend our VP Joe Zammit posted the picture of the tree with the crosses to his Facebook. A young man named Ben Hayes who was a former student saw the post and commented on his picture asking where the crosses were from. Joe replied that I had found them in the storage room, origin unknown. He replied that his grandfather had made those crosses, John Hayes hence the JH, and he had recognized his grandfather's craftsmanship from the picture. He said Ross loved those crosses because they were hand carved and so his grandfather would make them every year as a donation. His grandfather has since passed but he said he would be so very happy at how they were used because he and Ross were very close.

I thought this whole thing was such a beautiful story and really was something that highlighted for me the mystery and wonder of God. I asked a question and the Lord helped Ross find me an answer. I didn't know Ross Oakes but I do feel he is watching over chaplaincy at Pocock to this day.



*Our son Elijah Graham Wilson was born on May 4 2018!  
Mom: Katherine Mustachi (Wilson), Chaplain at Notre Dame in Ajax, DCDSB and Dad: Jared Wilson, Elementary school teacher of the DDSB*



*Thank you Fr. Andrij, Linda, Andrew, Patrick, John, Damiano, Cosmo, Andria, Aaron, Don, Margaret, and Katherine for contributing to the end of the school year edition of the CSCO newsletter.*

*The next one will be issued at Thanksgiving.*

*If you would like to contribute one of your highlights, a prayer, reflection or a poem, please send it to Lorenzo Campanelli at [cscovp@gmail.com](mailto:cscovp@gmail.com). Photos are always welcome, too.*

*Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed and happy summer holiday! Faith, peace, joy, and rest to you, sister and brother chaplains!*