



**DURHAM CATHOLIC  
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Learning and Living in Faith*

## **Memorandum**

To: Board of Trustees  
From: Gerard Winn, Director of Education  
Date: September 23, 2024  
Subject: **2024-2025 Spiritual Theme – Living in Hope**  
Origin: Katharine Stevenson, Superintendent of Education

### **Purpose**

As part of the Supporting Faith and Well-Being pillar of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Inspire 2026, the Durham Catholic District School Board (DCDSB) develops a spiritual theme to unite all members of the Catholic educational community and to focus faith formation initiatives. The spiritual theme encourages all members to make real, meaningful, and faith-filled connections each day to build the kingdom of God.

### **Background**

Pope Francis has announced that 2025 will be a Jubilee Year. This has become a spiritual tradition celebrated in the Church every 25 years. Pope Francis has chosen as the motto of the Jubilee, “Pilgrims of Hope.” Inspired by this significant moment, the DCDSB community will be guided by the spiritual theme of Living in Hope during the 2024-2025 school year.

### **Information**

Faith, hope and charity (love) are the three theological virtues. They are gifts from God that help us to live as children of God. Hope is the virtue that leads us to desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help and the grace of the Holy Spirit.

In our day-to-day language, the word “hope” is used to express when we want something to happen (e.g., I hope I do well on my assignment; I hope I get that new toy for Christmas). Sometimes these hopes are not realized. Pope Francis explains that in the Christian sense of the word, “hope does not deceive or disappoint because it is grounded in the certainty that nothing and no one may ever separate us from God’s love.” This relationship of faith and trust in God sustains us as we journey through life.

The virtue of hope also calls us into a loving relationship with one another. In his February 2022 [letter](#), Pope Francis writes, “We must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and far-sighted vision.” These words will guide our Living in Hope this year.

Grade 7-12 students across DCDSB were invited to participate in the design process for the 2024-2025 spiritual theme poster. In May 2024, 20 students attended a full-day workshop at the City of Oshawa’s Arts Resource Centre and the Robert McLaughlin Gallery. Throughout the workshop, students collaborated with central staff as they reflected upon what Living in Hope means to them. Many of their ideas have been incorporated into this year’s spiritual theme poster.

DCDSB staff, students, families, and communities are encouraged to use this spiritual theme poster to reflect upon how Living in Hope will inspire our journey together during the 2024-2025 school year and the 2025 Jubilee Year. Start-of-school resources have been made available to introduce Living in Hope to students and staff. As well, Catholic partners, such as the Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops will continue to provide Catholic educational resources as we journey forward to celebrate Jubilee 2025 in the new year.

GW/KS