Renewing the Promise –
A Personal Reflection

In the spring of 2018, the Bishops of Ontario (ACBO) released a Pastoral Letter on Catholic Education, *Renewing the Promise*. With the release of the letter, the Bishops have provided us with a very positive and affirming message. The letter uses the scriptural account of the Road to Emmaus as the basis for their reflection on the mission and vision of Catholic education, celebrating that a true encounter with Jesus can and does take place, each and every day within our Catholic schools. The letter invites all those who share responsibility for Catholic education in Ontario to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of the present moment. Letters invite a response, and a thoughtful reading of this letter can be meaningful for all involved with Catholic education.

You are encouraged to read the Pastoral Letter, *Renewing the Promise*, and to spend time reflecting on how it speaks to you directly, given your personal experience and perspective, and its meaning for you within your role and context.

A Community that Builds Relationships
A Community that Accompanies

Catholic schools are described as communities that accompany, and staff, parents and community members practise the art of accompaniment as they take the time to walk alongside one another, listening, and teaching, and in so doing, transforming.

1. In what ways have you accompanied others?

2. In what ways have you been accompanied within your community?

3. What more can you do?

A Community that Builds Relationships

Catholic schools are described as communities that build relationships. A sense of respect for the unique expertise and strengths of each and generous cooperation that acknowledges and celebrates the accomplishments of all is essential to develop the mutual trust that nurtures effective working relationships.

1. In what ways have you been affirmed by others for the role you play in Catholic Education?

2. In what ways have you affirmed others for their contributions?

3. What can you do to build trust, and encourage meaningful cooperation within your community context?
A Community that Encourages Engagement

Catholic schools are described as communities that encourage engagement and instil hope. The more we love God, the more we love our neighbour, and the more we engage in the community. Catholic schools help to promote engagement with the local and global community through their many acts of charity and by their witness to social justice and environmental stewardship.

1. How can you encourage those around you to engage with the world as agents of mercy, love and justice?

2. How can you ensure that the impetus for such good works is grounded in love for God known through: scripture, doctrine and worship?

A Community that Forms Joyful Disciples

Catholic schools are described as communities that form joyful disciples. In the Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis speaks about the joy that comes from Christ. On a daily basis, Catholic schools demonstrate the joy of believing and witness the Good News to the communities they serve.

1. In what ways does our community demonstrate the joy of believing?

2. How is this joy evident to those within the broader community?

3. How do you choose to serve your community in witness to the Good News in your life?
The Breaking of the Bread

One of the earliest titles given to the Eucharist was ‘the breaking of the bread’ and this speaks directly to the Emmaus experience. Every Sunday we are invited to gather as part of a worshipping community to experience this beautiful encounter. As we are fed with God’s Word and Body and Blood, we are strengthened and nourished and sent forth to serve the world with joy in our heart.

1. In what ways does your faith community nourish and sustain you?

2. In what ways does your involvement within your faith community offer encouragement and nourishment to others?

Growing in Faith

The Catholic education community is encouraged to support opportunities for faith formation for all members of the community in ways that are inviting, engaging, comprehensive and purposeful. Our apostolic faith is built on the witness of those who have experienced the Risen Christ in their lives and who have shared that truth in the way they live: close to Jesus, receiving the Eucharist, engaged in parish life, serving their family and those most in need.

1. Where do you find opportunities to grow in knowledge and understanding of your faith?

2. What kinds of opportunities for adult faith formation are most impactful for you?

3. How can you contribute so that your faith community meets your needs, and those of others?