

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CDSBEO Hosts Inspirational Faith Day Celebration

Kemptville, ON (Monday, October 1, 2018) – Staff from the **Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario** participated in a day of learning and reflection around the new spiritual theme *Be Holy – Joy springs from a loving heart!* Hosted at St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School in Cornwall, and broadcast live to five secondary school locations across the Board, members of the school community began the CDSBEO Faith Day with greetings from Board Chair Todd Lalonde, words of welcome from Director of Education John Cameron, as well as a keynote address from John L. Allen Jr., a renowned journalist specializing in coverage of the Vatican. Mr. Allen has written nine books on the Vatican and Catholic affairs. His articles have appeared in the Boston Globe, the New York Times, and he is the senior Vatican correspondent for CNN.

Director of Education John Cameron took the opportunity to thank staff in his morning address, "I would like to thank you all for your loving acts of kindness, for your holiness, for your enthusiasm in sharing our faith, and our hope in Catholic education. Most importantly, I would like to thank you for nurturing the saints of tomorrow, our students."

Following Director Cameron, the keynote address by John L. Allen Jr. provided insight into the leadership of the Holy Father Pope Francis, connecting his leadership and focus on mercy to the CDSBEO spiritual theme.

"I am going to try to contextualize the thought of *Joy springs from a loving heart!* through the example of Pope Francis. After all, the programmatic document of his papacy, was a document called *The Joy of the Gospel*. This is a Pope who has put joy at the centre of what he is about, and I think if you watch him in action, you will develop some insight not just into the ministry of Catholic education, but also the life of the Church at large," began Allen.

Allen discussed the idea of Pope Francis' belief that the solution to any crisis is not to be joyless, but to be more joyful – reasoning that if people can reconnect with the joy of their faith, they can also summon the will to face problems in a clear fashion.

"Joy is the answer, and this is obvious in Pope Francis' sense of mission, his passion for the peripheries, and his commitment to mercy."

"Every Friday, with no fanfare whatsoever, no television cameras, no photographers, Pope Francis does a mercy Friday. He will take part of his day and set out in his Ford Fiat, and he will go to a homeless shelter, or a prison, or a recovery centre for drug and alcohol addicts, and he will spend an astonishing chunk of his time being there with those people, trying to bring a message of redemption and of hope into those environments – bringing an infusion of joy into what is sometimes a very joyless existence."

Allen's message illuminated details of Pope Francis' focus on missionary leadership, and how the institute of Catholic education, and the maintenance of it as an institution, are worth doing only to the extent that they serve the mission.

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"Never forget that the mission of this school or any school in your system isn't these walls, or the facilities here, as wonderful as they are. It is that concrete flesh and blood young person upon whom you have the opportunity to have an impact."

"There is a model for joy filled living," Allen noted in his conclusion. "If we can be genuine missionaries, and if we can be truly passionate about those people that stand in the peripheries of our lives, and if we can be merciful in going about all of that... we have a successful model for Catholic education."

The afternoon session provided staff the opportunity to collaborate and discuss strategies to bring the new theme to life in CDSBEO schools and classrooms.

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario operates 39 elementary and 10 secondary schools across eight counties. The CDSBEO offers excellence in Catholic education through provincial-leading programs to approximately 12,800 students.

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Photo: Faith Day 2018.jpg - CDSBEO Director of Education John Cameron (right) and John L. Allen Jr. (left)

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