



November 17, 2020

Mr. Joseph Martino, Chair
Toronto Catholic District School Board
80 Sheppard Avenue East
Toronto, ON M2N 6E8

Dear Mr. Martino,

At a recent meeting of the Toronto Catholic District School Board a member of a delegation attempted to quote from the section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which concerns the teaching and the pastoral practice of the Church in caring for our brothers and sisters who experience same sex attractions. Shortly after he had begun reading the quotation, he was interrupted, and it was suggested that to continue reading from the Catechism was to be treading in dangerous waters, and would be putting down a marginalized and vulnerable community, and that the language of the Catechism is not proper.

That a Catholic should be criticized, and effectively be prevented by Catholic Trustees from reading from the Catholic Catechism at a meeting of a Catholic School Board is simply reprehensible. I highly commend Trustee Crawford for pointing out the significance of this act.

Catholic faith must guide all who are engaged in Catholic Education - including students, teachers, administrators, and trustees - or that education ceases to be Catholic.

In addition, if those engaged in Catholic Education do not appreciate the rich and life-giving faith of the Church, which is the defining characteristic of Catholic Education, and instead have bought into the fundamentally anti-Catholic narrative that misrepresents Catholic faith as lacking in compassion, then I question how they can fulfil their sacred mission, and truly serve those who are entrusted to their care. In fact, commitment to the truths of our faith is pledged in the Oath taken by the trustees of the Toronto Catholic District School Board:

LEADER: Will you be faithful to the teachings of the Church and to the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff and the authority of the Magisterium?

TRUSTEES: I will.

The world in which we live is dominated by a shallow secular vision of the human person, and of the purpose of life, a vision which is contrary to divine revelation, to reason, and to the profound heritage of Christian faith. It is disappointing when Catholic trustees allow that secular vision to replace the fullness of faith articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. We are called to be guided by the Holy Spirit, not by the deceptive spirit of the age.

As I listened to the dialogue at the meeting, in response to the reading of the passage from the Catechism, it became clear to me that the consideration that was given priority was not fidelity to the Gospel challenge calling us to holiness, or fidelity to the faith which Our Lord has entrusted to us for our eternal salvation, but rather a nervous attentiveness to how people might possibly react to the proclamation of that faith, and be offended. If Jesus Himself were to attend a meeting of the Toronto Catholic District School Board, I wonder if He would be interrupted, if he were to begin to say: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near," or many other things He says in the Gospel, because those words are perhaps not sufficiently soothing, and perhaps might offend. After all, many people were offended by the life-giving words of Our Lord Jesus, when He walked among us; the words of life do not merely soothe – with clarity and charity, they challenge us to repentance and to holiness.

I urge you and your fellow trustees to reflect upon these spiritual observations, and I pray that God may bless and guide you in the sacred mission which has been entrusted to you.

In Christ,

+ Thomas Card. Collins

Thomas Collins
Archbishop of Toronto.

cc: Trustees of TCDSB