



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE
SAINT PAUL HIGH SCHOOL CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING**

**Tuesday, February 18, 2025
Saint Paul School Library**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Saint Paul High School Catholic School Council, held on February 18, 2025 at 6:00pm.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Alex Attree

A. ROUTINE MATTERS

1. Opening Prayer –

Led by Alex Attree

2. Roll Call

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP		Present	Excused	Absent
Principal/Vice-Principal	Kelly Majka – Principal Jennifer Pirosko - VP	√		
Co - Chair	Amanda Leon	√		
Co-Chair	Alex Attree	√		
Secretary	Erin Clark	√		
Teacher Representative	Lindsay Pacilli	√		
Student Representative	Kate Bishop	√		
Parish Representative	Melissa Ross	√		
OAPCE Representative	Dana Sacco	√		
NCPIC Representative	Julie Bateman	√		
SEAC Representative	Tara Formisano		√	
	Lisa Caruso	√		
	Frank Caruso	√		
	Robyn Pearson	√		
	Rhonda Van Kleef	√		
	Shelby Brunni	√		
	Melissa Procopio			√
	Christine Sidhorn	√		

Jennifer Dolon	√		
Monica Bertolo	√		
Teresa Reich			√
Sandra Greco			√
Impa Bahati			√
Linda Rosano	√		
Tara Thornton			√

3. **Approval of the Agenda**

Moved by Melissa Ross and Robyn Pearson

THAT the SPHS Catholic School Council approve the Agenda of the SPHS Catholic School Council Meeting of February 18, 2025

CARRIED

4. **Approval of Minutes of the Saint Paul High School Catholic School Council Meeting of November 26, 2024.**

The Minutes could not be Approved during this meeting as they had not been emailed out to the council at that time. Council agreed to postpone approval to the next meeting. Approved meeting minutes will be posted on the spchs.ca website.

B. REPORTS;

1) Chair Report – Amanda Leon and Alex Attree

Welcome Back & Happy New Year!

We hope everyone had a blessed Christmas filled with love, laughter, and joy—and of course, that you rang in the New Year with excitement! Now that we’ve settled back into the routine, it’s time to embrace all that the second semester has to offer.

A Big Thank You to Our Educators!

Exams are done—phew! We know how much effort goes into preparing, studying, and pushing through that final stretch. A huge shout-out to all of our incredible teachers for their dedication, patience, and leadership in guiding our students through this busy time. The kindness and wisdom they share every day make a world of difference, and we are so grateful for each and every one of them!

Provincial Elections—Stay Informed!

Ah, politics... love them or hate them, they play an important role in our daily lives. With the Provincial Elections happening this month, we encourage everyone to stay informed and make their voices heard. One key issue to consider is Catholic education—ensure that your elected officials support its continuation. History has shown that some provinces have chosen to discontinue their Catholic school systems, and we must remain vigilant in advocating for our rights and choices.

A common misconception is that Catholic education costs taxpayers more—this is simply not true! In Ontario, taxpayers pay the same amount regardless, but they do have the choice of directing their education taxes to the school board of their preference. It’s all about choice, and that choice matters.

Parking Lot Patience—Drive Safe!

It’s no secret that school pickup and drop-off times can feel like navigating an obstacle course. With lots of moving cars, excited students, and even a few new drivers, things can get a little chaotic. A

friendly reminder to everyone: please be patient, stay alert, and above all, be courteous to fellow drivers and pedestrians. A little kindness on the road goes a long way!

Wishing everyone a fantastic second semester—let's make it a great one!

2) Student Report – Kate Bishop

Hello Catholic School Council, Moderators, Mrs. Majka and Parents,
Since we last met, Student Council organized and held our very successful Semi-Formal, themed Diamonds and Disco, which was hosted at Club Italia. We had photo booths and photographers there to entertain outside of the main event, which was obviously the food and dance party! Also in December the music department took their talent to the road to visit Saint Paul's feeder schools with their roadshow. The Music department visited Saint Vincent de Paul, Mary Ward and Notre Dame. For the other students at our school as well as the musicians' family and friends, the music department performed their roadshow here at Saint Paul on December 11th and 13th. This show was a showcase of all the talent we have here at Saint Paul in the arts, whether in vocal, instrumental, technological or theatrical!

Before we went home for the holidays we celebrated in advance with our advent mass, Student Council's 12 days of giveaways, Christmas spirit week and our annual Christmas assembly on the last day before the break, which allowed the entire school to both engage in games and also enjoy a snippet of the roadshow! All of these events were definitely appreciated and well received by the student body as they both engaged and excited the students for the holidays but also reminded them of what the season is really about.

Once students returned from exams they were in full force to get them prepared for the end of January. Not many events took place as we were all getting ready for exams, but Student Council did try to ease the stress by giving out Kit Kat bars at the entrances of the school on the last day of class before exams to alleviate the stress and encourage the students to "Have a Break!". And just like that, semester one was over and we moved right into semester two, and for some, our last semester at Saint Paul. Grade level assemblies took place to remind the students what is expected of them, especially considering their age and grade level.

With February being Black History month, Saint Paul has made an extreme effort to ensure this month is honoured and recognized within our school by playing music by black artists and reading the historical impact of their music every morning. We had two speakers from Get Real who shared with us the importance of Black history and the lesser known black historians who had astronomical impacts on our county and world. Every grade had the opportunity to attend this workshop on February 12th. The presentations were a success as the students were both respectful and engaged in what the speakers had to say.

For the rest of February, Valentines Day celebrations took place today with saxograms being given out by the music department and student council giving out goodie bags to the students who matched in our "Find Your Match" activity, as well as out of uniform for VIP members. On Friday the 21st, Saint Paul will be collecting Toonies for Tuition to help with funding for students in other provinces who have to pay to attend Catholic schools.

And looking into next month, some Female Music Students are recording and putting together a song and video for International Women's Day to highlight all the female talent and abilities we have at Saint Paul, not only in music but also tech, arts, leadership and education! So look out for that on Instagram on March 8th!

Of course nothing mentioned above could have been possible without the planning, organizing and coordinating of Music Council, Athletic Council, Student Council, their moderators, administration, Mrs. Majka, Student Support, and, of course, you, our Patriot Catholic School Council. Thank you for your unwavering support.

3) NCPIC/OAPCE/SEAC Report –/Julie Bateman/Dana Sacco

NCPIC Report – Julie Bateman

See attached documents from NCPIC

OAPCE Report – Dana Sacco

OAPCE Report

February 2025

Dana Sacco attended an online OAPCE meeting on Thursday, February 13th, 2025. The meeting started with a guest speaker, then participants were divided into Break Out rooms based on regions for further discussion and then everyone met back together in the main call.

Guest Speaker - Josephine Lombardi

Her website is josephine.lombardi.com

Dr. Lombardi presented "Pilgrims of Hope: A Walk Through of the Making of a Jubilee Year and all the graces associated with participating in this special Jubilee Year of Hope."

Some highlights from the presentation include: going beyond ourselves for the greater good - in our case, for Catholic Education.

Stressed the importance of discipline at a young age. If we put the time in when they are young and discipline fairly it will pay off if they long run. We must not allow them to do what they want as they will get hurt and hurt others. Consistent discipline will help our children experience fulfillment and happiness.

We need to teach students to be sincere with sorrow, forgiveness and what we will receive is mercy

She spoke about the importance of acts of reparation - which is repairing the damage after our wrong doings. Even if we are sorry and we have been forgiven, we are expected to make things right. She used the example of a teenager who was supposed to be home at 11, however brought the car home at 2 am.

Even though they are sorry, they have been forgiven, there still needs to be a consequence (i.e. not using the car for two weeks). She explained that this is God's justice.

This year, the Jubilee Year of Hope we are encouraged to detach from all sin and we are all called to holiness. We are encouraged to and encourage others to make a conscious effort not to sin. Encouraged to go to confession. Encouraged if at all financially possible to take pilgrimages. For instance there is one Pilgrims of Hope at St Anne de Beaupre in Quebec July 17-25.

Items discussed during regional break out sessions:

OAPCE Parent Survey

OAPCE is in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry has asked all regions to encourage as many parents as possible to complete this survey. They would like parents' feedback as to whether or not their schools and school boards are providing information for bullying awareness and prevention, cyber security, the new vaping policy, and the new cell phone policy. They also would like to hear suggestions from parents as OAPCE develops future plans.

All parents in the community are encouraged to complete the survey.

Asked admin if it can be added to the weekly email and Ms. Majka agreed.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3vD3J9H_YKSPnq7VYfsH-GRg5wjE6rB77R9VMvdw8GTcbLQ/viewform

OAPCE 86th Anniversary Conference

Theme - Coming Together as One

Being held at St. Michael High School in Niagara Falls this year

Saturday, May 24th

Encouraging as many parents as possible to attend

Each school is given funds for Parent Involvement - this \$500.00 can possibly be used towards sending parents to the conference, for travel expenses, accommodations and meals

Asked committee members to check their schedules and we can possibly get a group together. We will discuss at our next meeting in April and Kelly will look into the parent involvement funds with the finance secretary.

Once the details have been released, Dana will email everyone

SEAC Minutes for December 4th/ 2024

Community Living (Welland/Pelham) – Monique Somma
Social Role Valorization (SRV) Learning Resources
Canada

- Southern Ontario Training Group Offers 4-5 SRV workshops each year. Website: srv-sotg.ca Contact: Eric Tinsley-Baker
- SRV Conference in Halifax Next SRV conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Details: SRV Conference US
- SRVIP Training Workshops by Marc Timenski & Jo Massarelli. Website: srvip.org
- Month Table Talks Monthly 45-minute talks on SRV. Email Jo at jo@srvip.org to join.
- Wolfensberger Archives SRV resources at Nebraska University. Website: Nebraska Archives
- SRV Journal Read past SRV journal issues. Website: SRV Journal

Student Senate Update by Kate

- Lead Out Loud Event The Student Senate hosted the Lead Out Loud event for student leaders from elementary schools. After a keynote by Jon Hansen, senators worked together to create plans for responsible social media use, based on Catholic social teachings.
- Christmas Plans All eight high schools are preparing for their Christmas events, including assemblies, masses, and spirit weeks in the final week before the holidays. They're also holding food drives to support specific causes chosen by each school.

Special Education Updates from Student Support Department - Superintendent Pizzoferrato/Danny/Jim/Ann Marie

1. Teacher Training Teachers and leaders completed behavior management training on November 20th.
2. Kindergarten Info Sessions Parents of kids starting kindergarten can learn about the process at sessions hosted by Niagara Children's Centre. Upcoming dates: December 10th and January 16th.
3. Gifted Carpentry Program A special carpentry workshop for gifted students will happen in late January at Notre Dame Launch Centre.
4. Transition Meetings Meetings to help students move into grade 9 or kindergarten are planned for January at local high schools.
5. Sledge Hockey League Join the Niagara Sledge Hockey League! Open to all ages and abilities, and families can play together. Try it free before signing up. Cost: \$150. Register here: Parasport Ontario - Sledge Hockey.
6. Winterfest Celebration On December 11th, Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School will host a fun Winterfest for special education students.

January 8th SEAC Notes

Presentation Summary: The Power of Community – Michael Jacques

Michael Jacques, a public speaker and author with autism, shared how community support shaped his success. He emphasized the importance of family, friends, education, and inclusion.

As a leader in ReAction4Inclusion, he promotes student-led leadership and inclusivity. Despite challenges with reading and writing, he has published a book, worked at Sobeys, served on multiple boards, and advised the Minister on Special Education.

His message: Support, believe in, and focus on every student's strengths.

Letter to Ministry of Education

- SEACs across Ontario are asking for more funding for special education and solutions for the shortage of Educational Assistants (EAs).
- Many schools face daily shortages, causing students who need support to stay home.
- Suggested solutions include free EA tuition, better pay and benefits, and improved working conditions.
- Niagara Catholic SEAC is considering supporting this letter while also gathering more data.

Director's Performance Appraisal

- A new evaluation is required for school board directors. A confidential survey will be sent out for those who wish to participate.

Niagara Catholic Education Award of Distinction

- SEAC can send a representative to help choose award recipients. Meeting on Feb. 4.

Agency Updates

Niagara Children's Centre Update

- Thanked Niagara Catholic for supporting their tiered service model.
- Their Extensive Needs Service program is seeing positive results in helping children participate and engage at school.
- Transition to School planning is underway for children starting school in the fall.
- New Winter Event Guide includes two programs for kids 8-13:
 - A Tween Group focusing on social skills through games and crafts.
 - Prepared Pals, which teaches life skills like baking and money management.

Down Syndrome Niagara Update

- Seeking community input through a survey on Facebook to help plan the fall DSAO Conference.
- World Down Syndrome Day is on March 21, with the theme: "We call on all Governments to Improve Our Support Systems."

Bethesda Services Update

- Spring program begins in March for 90 children, running until August in partnership with Niagara Children's Centre.
- Currently 70 children have enrolled, with plans in place.
- Program is hosted in Niagara Catholic schools, providing support in kindergarten classrooms.
- Winter Service Guide is available on the Bethesda website, featuring recreational and clinical programs for ages 2 through adulthood.

Student & Staff Reports

- High schools held Christmas events and food drives.
- Schools are preparing for IPRC (special education review) meetings and open houses.

Student Support Department Update

- Snack and Chat: A system-wide program in kindergarten classrooms to build communication, turn-taking, and listening skills during snack and lunchtime while reducing screen time.
- Gifted Program: January 21-22 module focuses on wood construction, teaching students about carpentry, safety, design, and measuring.

● Staff Training:

- January 17 PA Day: BMS recertification for elementary EAs, CYWs, and ECEs, featuring Dr. Jody Carrington on human connection.
- January 29 PA Day: Same session for secondary staff and social workers. SEAC members are invited to attend.
- New Initiatives: 21 programs planned for Behavioural Analysts, including school collaborations with chefs for student programming.

Trustee Report

- In December, trustees and administrative staff attended an annual faith retreat at Holy Cross, combining learning with a hands-on pizza-making activity to connect with Catholic values.

4)- Parish Report- Melissa Ross

Youth Ministry / Stuffy Sale

- Fundraiser has run at the following locations:
- SVDP (\$468.50) | Mary Ward (\$120) | St. Gabriel (\$401)
- Total raised so far - \$989.50
- Newman sale starts this Thursday and runs into next week
- OLOS March 22nd and 23rd (exclusive stuffies)

St. Vincent de Paul Society

- In great need of pasta sauce and are low on pancake syrup, pork and beans and canned vegetables.
- Food donation baskets are located at all of the church entrances, if you are able to help it would be greatly appreciated.
- Monthly meeting was rescheduled to this Wednesday February 19 at 7 pm in the Lacey Room.
- Anyone wanting to become a member or find out more about what they do is welcome to attend.

Development and Peace - Share Lent Workshop

- They'll be discussing Pope Francis' call to cancel the debt of poor countries.
- Being held March 1st, 2025 / 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. / St. Alfred Church, St. Catharines · To register contact St. Alfred's church or register here.

Caroline Matovic, Spiritual Director

- Running a monthly series in the parish hall about the work of St. Ignatius and the discernment of spirits.
- The first workshop will be about deciphering the will of God in your life.
- March 8th, 10am to 12pm. · Register online (QR code in bulletin)

First Communion and Confirmation

- Registrations are now closed for this year.

Delta Bingo

- OLOS is looking for 2 more Bingo Volunteers. · Contact Valerie at the Parish office or email her at business@scapular.ca for details.

The Prayer Shawl Group

- Looking for donations of yarn. Anything is appreciated.
- Drop off at the parish office.

Weekly Euchre at Scapular

- Due to a lack of interest, no longer running the Wed weekly Euchre club in the Ferrando room.

Parish Missional Health Assessment

- Bishop Bergie is asking clergy and as many parishioners as possible across the Diocese to complete the Parish Missional Health Assessment.

- This is a tool to help define a clear, realistic picture of every parish's strengths and growth areas. · There's a link in the bulletin from this past Sunday to complete the brief survey.
- You'll get instant, personalized results delivered straight to your inbox.
- All results are also submitted anonymously to the diocese to give a comprehensive overview of how we are fulfilling our missionary call to evangelize.

Messages of Hope Speaker Series

- The MESSAGES OF HOPE Speaker Series is a special Jubilee 2025 initiative designed to engage those living in the Diocese of St. Catharines to learn about hope.
- Each month, in venues around the diocese, a speaker has been invited to give a talk that explores some messages and themes that Pope Francis highlighted in the Jubilee's Bull of Indiction
- It kicked off in January with Bishop Bergie speaking at the Cathedral
- Father Rico will be the second featured speaker
- He is speaking on February 24, 2025 at 7:00 pm at the Catholic Centre · To register see the link in the Sunday bulletin

Choose Life Niagara

- Annual dinner on March 1st at 5pm at Club Roma
- \$60 adults, \$30 students · Purchase tickets at www.chooselife.ca/events

Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education

- Bishop Bergie is the honorary guest at their annual benefit gala
- March 27, 2025 at 6pm at Club Roma
- \$100 tickets · Register online or contact Ana Pisano at the board office

Serra Club of St. Catharines

- Holding a murder mystery dinner at Club Roma
- May 3rd at 5:30pm
- \$65 includes dinner, drink ticket and the murder mystery · www.serrastc.ca for more info

5) Staff Report – Lindsay Pacilli

Sports:

The Winter sports season is in full swing; results can be seen on the board's N.C.A.A. website (<http://www.ncaa.ca/>)

The swimming team competed at SOSSA last week and we currently have 7 swimmers who have qualified for OFSAA, which will be held in Toronto on March 4-5.

The Boy's Hockey Team ended their regular season play in second place. Tomorrow the boys take on Holy Cross at the Gale Centre for the chance to move on in playoff action.

Extra-curriculars:

NCDSB Instrumental Music Festival - SAINT PAUL Music Dept. to host all NCDSB High School BANDS (Wed., April 9, 2025) for an Adjudicated Festival and Clinic w/ professional performers/composers - this will also be affiliated with Musicfest Canada! Our 45-member Concert band will be performing and we'll hopefully qualify for Nationals again as we did last year!

StarFest NATIONALS! - Niagara Falls (May 8 - 10) Drama/Musical Theatre Club. All of our MTC students qualified for Nationals this year!!

Concert Band - NATIONALS! (Thursday, May 15) YORK UNIVERSITY, TORONTO! Our Concert Band received a high Silver standing last year which qualified us for Nationals this year!

Spring Showcase/Arts SHSM Night! (Thurs., May 29, 6 PM) A night of music, drama, musical theatre, dance, and short films/trailers!

CANADA'S WONDERLAND Music Festival (Friday, May 30th!)

ARTS BANQUET - Delphi Hall (Thursday, June 5 from 6 - 9 PM) recognizing and celebrating all of Art students for a tremendously successful year! This will be a semi-formal evening where students will enjoy some appetizers, awards, and a dance!

Spec. Ed:

The Spec. Ed. Room is back in the swing of things for semester two. The greater majority of the students are integrated into regular classes and doing great things. The students are taking part in classes such as Co-op, Food and Nutrition, Art, Technology, and English.

The Patriot Perks (aka Coffee Cart) program has been a wonderful success

Social and life skills (eg. Conversation, money collection) are being learned

Money is being raised for special education classroom programs and events (eg. Bowling, movies, Clifton Hill Fun Pass)

Friday's programming lesson will incorporate cooking and/or baking

March of Dimes is coming into the special education classroom every Wednesday afternoon to deliver a Paving the Path (to employment) program

This began today (ie. February 19th) and goes until Wednesday, May 14th

The Special Olympics Bocce tournament is Thursday, March 6th at the Sinnicks Sportsplex

SNAP is Thursday, March 20th at Brock University

Discussions are taking place with students and parents/guardians regarding courses for the 2025-2026 school year

Homework Club:

Approximately 70 students regularly access the Saint Paul Homework Club this school year. Students are able to receive teacher support for various subjects or work with a Peer Tutor. Peer Tutors can share their gifts, develop life skills, and earn community service hours for assisting their peers! The homework club runs on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in the library from 2:15-3:15. Students can sign up for support in the Library, Resource Room, or the Student Success Classroom.

6) Principal Report – Kelly Majka

Lots has occurred since our last meeting in November.

SEM 1 WRAP-UP:

January 21, 2025 was the last official day of classroom instruction for Semester 1 classes. Semester 1 Final Exams were on January 22, 2025 and ran through January 28, 2025.

Our Gr. 9 Math students completed the EQAO Math Assessment on Jan 16-17 and our SEM 2 Grade 9 Math students will write them on June 16-17.

Our Grade 10 students who had English Semester 1 and wrote the OSSLT their results came in from the Ministry and we mailed those results out to our Grade 10 students. We still have a second OSSLT session on April 7-9.

Our turnaround day was held on January 30, 2025 where students had the opportunity to view final assessments during the first portion of the day followed by students attending their semester 2 classes.

Semester 1 Final Report cards were available on the Parent Portal on February 10, 2025. Hard copies are available through the main office as per parent request.

SEM 2 INFO & COURSE SELECTION:

Semester 2 is now under way and students have begun Course Option Sheets for 2025-2026 school year. This includes individually meeting with Student Services Guidance counsellors and ensuring their courses are chosen and entered into MyBlueprint. This is key for students to get into and secure the courses that they want for next school year. Also, the \$55.00 2025-2026 activity fee is due on school cash online. I encourage all parents and guardians to discuss intentions with their children throughout this process. Guidance Counsellors, Mr. Ryan Defoe and Mr. Ted Shellhorne are available to discuss course options and pathway planning until the registration period has been completed.

GRADE 12 & GRAD:

Our 12B and Gr. 12 graduating students have been receiving early acceptance offers from College and University Programs. Exciting decisions will have to be made by families in the months ahead. The Graduation Ceremony is scheduled for the evening on June 25th at the Niagara Falls Convention. The Graduation Fee will remain the same as the past 2 years at \$130.00. Graduation activities such as the Grad Mass and Luncheon, Graduation Retreat, the Prom will be presented to Graduates in the coming weeks.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH:

February is Black History Month and Saint Paul has a number of planned activities: Daily on our morning announcements we play historic, legendary Black Musicians and read their Bio for all students and staff to appreciate and take in. Additionally, daily on our afternoon announcements we focus on Black Iconic Leaders that helped shape Canada and where we are today. These musicians and leaders are posted outside of our main office. On Wed Feb 12 we had The Get Real Movement in to conduct 4 grade-level

workshops on Black History. On Friday February 14 (our PA Day) our staff heard from Leela MadhavaRau who spoke on equity, diversity and inclusion.

SKILLS COMPETITION

During the end of Feb/beginning of March our students will be competing in the NCDSB Skills competition in various disciplines including: Baking, Culinary, TV/Video Production, Coding, Robotics, Photography, Fresh Beats, Cabinet making, Carpentry, Home Building & Plumbing.

C. OPEN DISCUSSION –

There was some open discussion around the possibility of attending a conference as a unified council or with as many members as were available and interested. The discussion was prompted by the OAPCE report from Dana Sacco that mentioned that the 86th Annual OAPCE conference will be held in Niagara Falls on May 24th at Saint Michael High School. Alex mentioned previously attending and recommended the experience. Dana suggested that in the OAPCE meeting, other attendees suggested that they had been successful using Parent Engagement Grant money to support conference travel expenses for Parent Council members attending. Kelly Majka indicated that she would look into the parameters of spending for the Grant money. Others expressed a general consensus that attending a local conference was a possibility they would be interested in exploring closer to the date of the event and that this conference in particular seemed to be a good one to attend. An agreement was made to discuss topic again at the next meeting.

QUESTION PERIOD:

Q. Robyn – Is there a way to see the full calendar of events for each sport on Instagram.

A. Kelly – The NCAA (Niagara Catholic Athletic Association) website is the most effective way to see game schedules for all sports. Social media is only populated with material that coaches share to the social media team.

A. Dana – The pulse app can also provide practice times if coaches upload items for their specific sport.

A. Lindsay – Also Coaches put announcements in for reading over the P.A. of tryouts and practice times until the team is picked. The website for the board wide athletics scheduling is www.ncaa.ca

**D. NEXT MEETING DATE;
April 22, 2025**

E. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was led by Jenn Dolan

F. ADJOURNMENT

That the February 18th meeting of the SPSHS Catholic School Council be adjourned. Moved by Erin Clark and Julie Bateman

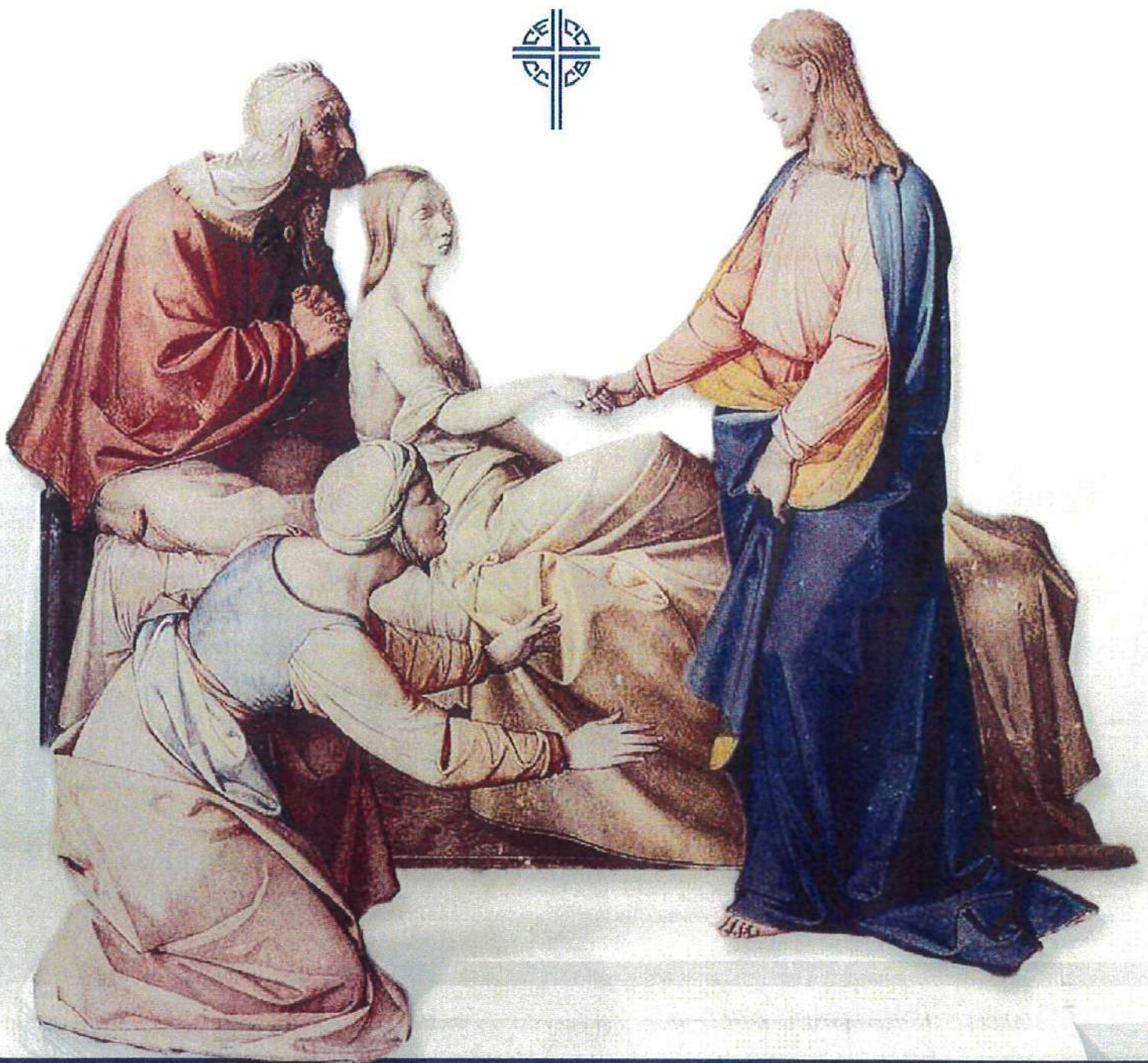
CARRIED

This meeting was adjourned at 6:56 pm

Called to Witness and Proclaim

A PASTORAL LETTER ON EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS IN THE FAMILY

EPISCOPAL COMMISSION FOR EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS
CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



Introduction

Dear families.

In the Gospel of Mark, we hear the story of an ordinary family, the family of Jairus, caught up in an extraordinary situation. Jesus encounters this family, listens to them, walks with them, enters into their reality, and calls them to a life transformed and brimming with hope.

... A great crowd gathered round Jesus; and he was by the lake.

Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly,

"My little daughter is at the point of death.

Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live."

So he went with him. ...

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say,

"Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?"

But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue,

"Do not fear, only believe."

He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

When he had entered, he said to them,

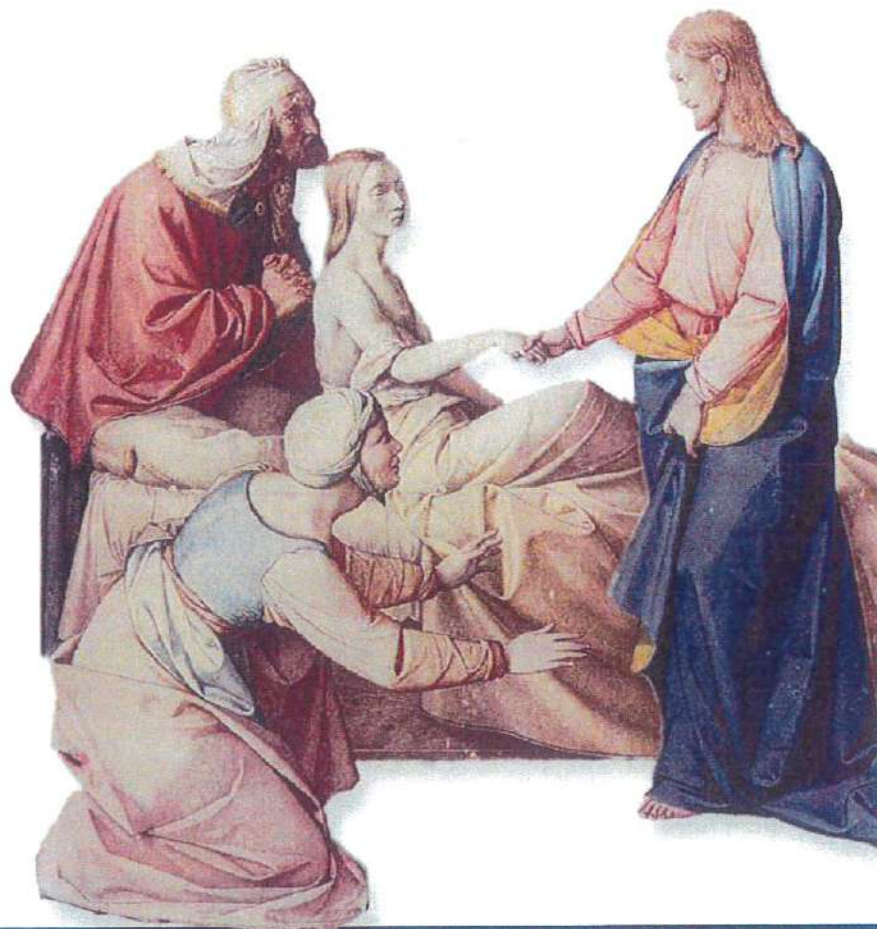
"Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping."


And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was.

He took her by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha cum*", which means, "Little girl, get up!" And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement.

He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

(Mark 5:21-24, 35-43)





The encounter of Jesus with the family of Jairus speaks directly to the experience of families today. Jairus has a dearly loved daughter who has taken ill. Her life hangs in the balance. Moved by love for his daughter and hope that Jesus can make her well, Jairus leaves his daughter at home to be cared for by her mother and members of the community and goes to find Jesus. When Jairus sees Jesus, he begs him, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” A life-changing encounter with Jesus then transforms the family of Jairus into hope-filled missionary disciples.

Today, like Jesus, the Church wishes to enter into the experience of families, to walk with families, and to partner with families to proclaim the Good News that centres on and radiates from the Gospel. The heart of the Good News is that:

JESUS CHRIST LOVES YOU. HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE YOU. AND NOW HE IS LIVING AT YOUR SIDE EVERY DAY TO ENLIGHTEN, STRENGTHEN AND FREE YOU.

(Evangelii Gaudium no. 164)

Catechesis in the Family

Families, which we often call the domestic Church,¹ are schools of love. In families, adults and young people first learn to give and receive love, to live in community, to grow in wisdom and knowledge, to forgive and settle differences, and to express compassion. Families are made up of more than one generation. Catechesis, or the way we share or echo the faith from one generation to another, is also intergenerational. Pope Saint Paul VI wrote, “The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them.”²

The encounter between Jesus and the family of Jairus happens “on the way” – on the way from one town to another. Catechesis in the family is much like this. It often takes place in the car, on the way from one place to another, from one activity to another. It happens as we respond to the real situations of everyday life. It happens



Photo: June Ng/istock.com

when family members pause in the midst of a busy schedule to reflect on the events of daily life in the light of faith: to enlighten, to clarify, to praise, to pray, to give thanks to God or to be silent for a moment.

Families today face many challenges, just as the family of Jairus did. The ways that we respond to these challenges are often imperfect. Still, the family is “a proclamation of faith in that it is the natural place in which faith can be lived in a simple and spontaneous manner.”³ That proclamation of faith, which families share primarily by witness, is called the *Kerygma*. Pope Francis beautifully describes the threefold heart of the *Kerygma* in his letter *The Joy of the Gospel*:

JESUS CHRIST LOVES YOU. HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE YOU. AND NOW HE IS LIVING AT YOUR SIDE EVERY DAY TO ENLIGHTEN, STRENGTHEN AND FREE YOU.

(Evangelii Gaudium, no. 164)

Families echo and reveal the love of Jesus Christ in the way they give and receive love. Families echo and reveal the love of Jesus Christ when they lay down their lives for one another in and through the daily sacrifices, or self-giving, of parents denying themselves for their children⁴ and of children being generous to their siblings. Families walk with each other in good times and in hard times, in sickness and in health. From the beginning, when a

man and woman express their love and commitment in their marriage vows, families become schools of love, bearing witness to the Gospel in daily life.

Catechesis with the Family

In the Gospel story of Jesus’ encounter with Jairus and his family, it is clear that Jesus is the Good News for this family. He responds to the father’s request, made out of love for his daughter. He accompanies Jairus to his home. He literally meets the family where they are: in their grief, fear and pain. Moved with compassion, Jesus heals the daughter and restores life. The family of Jairus was transformed by hope through their encounter with Jesus. Because of this encounter, the entire community is transformed by hope. Those who had gathered to mourn went away rejoicing and bearing witness to the wonders God had done.

Jesus walked with the family of Jairus on their journey from sickness to health, from despair to hope, from death to life. The Church wishes



Photo: SolStock/iStock.com

to walk this same journey with families today, accompanying, supporting and guiding them in various ways. When families gather with the parish community for Sunday Mass, the homily is a significant moment of encounter that helps families place the Word of God in dialogue with the events of daily life. The celebrations of Sacraments and feasts of the liturgical year also provide opportunities for catechesis for families and groups of families. Parish-based catechetical programs and events aim to deepen knowledge and enlighten experience by drawing on the rich storehouse of our Tradition. This storehouse includes “frequent recourse to prayer and the sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation,”⁵ Scripture, the witness of the Holy Family and the lives of the saints, doctrine and the story of God’s ongoing intervention in history.

“In and among families, the Gospel message should always resound; the core of that message, the *kerygma*, is what is most beautiful, most excellent, most appealing and at the same time most necessary. This message has to occupy the center of all evangelizing activity”⁶:

JESUS CHRIST LOVES
YOU. HE GAVE HIS LIFE
TO SAVE YOU. AND NOW
HE IS LIVING AT YOUR
SIDE EVERY DAY TO
ENLIGHTEN. STRENGTHEN
AND FREE YOU.

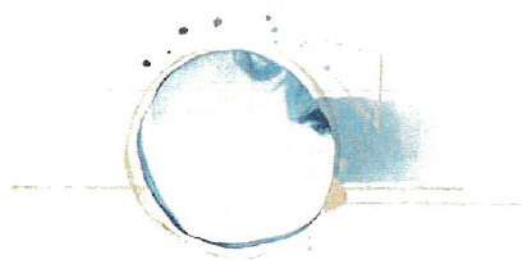
(Evangelii Gaudium, no. 164)




Photo: FG Trade/iStock.com

Catechesis of the Family

At the conclusion of the biblical narrative that tells of the transformative encounter between Jesus and the family of Jairus, the daughter is healed and given new life and hope. This family is transformed into a living witness to the power of life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. They become missionary disciples for their community. They transform the community through their witness of love, resilience, mercy and reconciliation. They transform the community through the story that they tell and retell. We see this dynamic all around us today but often fail to recognize it as the evangelizing and catechizing activity of the family in the midst of the wider community.





A life-changing encounter with Jesus transformed the family of Jairus into missionary disciples. Having been transformed themselves, they begin to transform the world. Today, the family shares the mission of the Church: to go out into all the spheres in which the members live and move and have influence and to “make disciples” – missionary disciples – who are formed and equipped to listen to the Lord, heed his voice and transform the world by love. As sons and daughters, sisters and brothers, friends and neighbours, the family acts as leaven, enriching and enlivening the world.⁷

This missionary discipleship of the family of Jairus has a ripple effect that continues to animate and enliven the Christian community and the entire world, right down to our own

age. Then, as now, the family shares the mission given by Jesus to the entire Church by building up the Christian community and bearing witness to the Gospel in society.⁸ The family proclaims, by witness and word, the life-changing, world-changing message that,

JESUS CHRIST LOVES YOU. HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE YOU. AND NOW HE IS LIVING AT YOUR SIDE EVERY DAY TO ENLIGHTEN, STRENGTHEN AND FREE YOU.

(Evangelii Gaudium no. 164)



Photo: skynesher/Stock.com

Conclusion

We, the members of the Episcopal Commission for Evangelization and Catechesis, hope that this pastoral letter gives you and your family support and encouragement. In it we have endeavoured to look with fresh eyes at the life-changing encounter of Jesus with the family of Jairus, seeing in it a model of catechesis in the family, with the family and of the family. Know that your bishops walk with you and stand beside you, praying for you as Saint Paul prayed in his letter to the Ephesians:

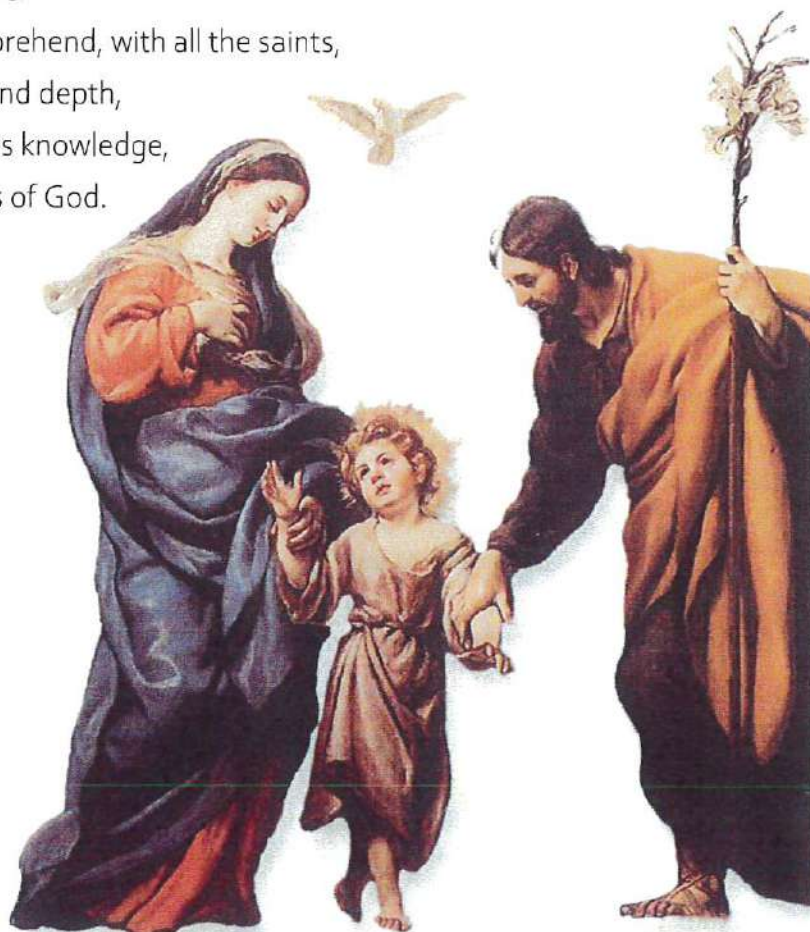
... I bow my knees before the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.
I pray that, according to the riches of his glory,
he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being
with power through his Spirit,
and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith,
as you are being rooted and grounded in love.


I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints,
what is the breadth and length and height and depth,
and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge,
so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

(Ephesians 3:14-19)

Endnotes

- 1 [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), no. 2204.
- 2 [Evangelii Nuntiandi](#), no. 71.
- 3 [Directory for Catechesis](#), no. 227.
- 4 [Patris Corde](#), no. 7.
- 5 [Familiaris Consortio](#), no. 33.
- 6 [Directory for Catechesis](#), no. 230.
- 7 [Directory for Catechesis](#), no. 58.
- 8 [Apostolicam Actuositatem](#), no. 2.





Episcopal Commission for Evangelization and Catechesis

*Issued with the approval of the Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
26 July 2024, Feast of Saint Anne and Saint Joachim, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary*



Canadian Conference of
Catholic Bishops

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Detail of “Christ Resurrects the Daughter of Jairus” by Johan Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869), pen with black ink over pencil, watercolour, 30.7 x 37.7 cm, 1815, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

Detail of “Holy Family” by Claudio Coello (1642-1693), oil on canvas, 248 x 169 cm, second half of 17th century, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

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Diocesan Jubilee 2025 **PILGRIMAGES**

THE HOLY DOORS OF ROME WITH BISHOP BERGIE

OCTOBER 16 – 24, 2025

For information contact Ineke Brinkman
of Direct Travel and Pilgrimage Tours,
905-988-1313 or ibrinkman@dt.com

YOUNG ADULT PILGRIMAGE TO THE OUR LADY OF ROSARY SHRINE (WELLAND)

SUMMER 2025

PILGRIMAGE TO MARTYN'S SHRINE, MIDLAND

A National Pilgrimage Site

FALL 2025

Details to be shared at www.SaintCD.com





JUBILEE 2025

CALENDAR OF MAJOR EVENTS

DECEMBER 2024

24 December

Opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica



Photo Vatican Media

JANUARY 2025

24-26 January

Jubilee of the World of Communications

FEBRUARY 2025

8-9 February

Jubilee of Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel

15-18 February

Jubilee of Artists

21-23 February

Jubilee of Deacons

MARCH 2025

8-9 March

Jubilee of the World of Volunteering

28 March

24 Hours for the Lord

28-30 March

Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy

APRIL 2025

5-6 April

Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers

25-27 April

Jubilee of Teenagers

28-29 April

Jubilee of People with Disabilities

MAY 2025

1-4 May

Jubilee of Workers

4-5 May

Jubilee of Entrepreneurs

10-11 May

Jubilee of Marching Bands

12-14 May

Jubilee of the Eastern Churches

16-18 May

Jubilee of Confraternities

30 May - 1 June

Jubilee of Families, Children, Grandparents and the Elderly



JUNE 2025

7-8 June

Jubilee of Ecclesial Movements, Associations and New Communities

9 June

Jubilee of the Holy See

14-15 June

Jubilee of Sport

20-22 June

Jubilee of Governments

23-24 June

Jubilee of Seminarians

25 June

Jubilee of Bishops

25-27 June

Jubilee of Priests

JULY 2025

28 July - 3 August

Jubilee of Youth

SEPTEMBER 2025

15 September

Jubilee of Consolation

20 September

Jubilee of Justice

26-28 September

Jubilee of Catechists

OCTOBER 2025

4-5 October

Jubilee of the Missions

4-5 October

Jubilee of Migrants

8-9 October

Jubilee of Consecrated Life

11-12 October

Jubilee of Marian Spirituality

31 October - 2 November

Jubilee of the World of Education



NOVEMBER 2025

16 November

Jubilee of the Poor

22-23 November

Jubilee of Choirs

DECEMBER 2025

14 December

Jubilee of Prisoners



Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria

3 Lyman Street, St. Catharines

St. Vincent de Paul Church

73 Picton Street, NOTL

Our Lady of the Rosary Shrine

4706 Miller Road, Welland

Gethsemane Ministries

84008 Wellandport Rd,
Wellandport

Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre

7020 Stanley Ave,
Niagara Falls



Local Jubilee

Pilgrimage

 Sites

