



*Working Together for Catholic Education*

**June 10, 2009**

## **A Message From Your Executive Director**

When the Ministry of Education announced its new character education mandate nearly three years ago, everyone in the Catholic school system was excited. Character education is exactly what we are all about! It is why parents send their children to us. They value the faith-based education and formation for discipleship that students receive in a Catholic school, and expect nothing less than full-fledged character development in light of the Gospel values.

In many ways, character education is “old news” for those of us in Catholic education. However, through the course of my educational career I have often been amazed at the way the old can become new. I am delighted with the energy and enthusiasm that have grown since we took up the challenge to renew and reframe our commitment to character education.

Inspired by the direction of Ontario’s Catholic Bishops, a working team representing the school boards within the Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative seized the challenge and began researching best practices in the classrooms of this province and beyond. Together, they have compiled “Our Language, Our Story”, a comprehensive new resource that will enrich and enliven teachers’ commitment to Catholic character development.

Rooted in the theological and cardinal virtues, “Our Language, Our Story” provides practical tools and clear strategies to help build the character of students through the model of Jesus Christ. This is a tremendously exciting development in our approach to Catholic education, and I firmly believe that this resource will play an integral role in lesson planning and course development for many years to come.

There are many people who contributed to the production of such a powerful and impressive package. The writing team contributed countless hours, their own wisdom and the benefit of a broad professional network. They were inspired by their clergy and Church leaders who provided guidance, especially the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario’s position paper, “Character Development and the Virtuous Life”. We were all invigorated by Bishop Paul-André Durocher’s clear direction as he presented the above paper at our Catholic School Character Education Symposium in Kingston last fall.

Our colleagues in the Catholic Curriculum Corporation and the Northern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative were also invaluable in reviewing and refining the material we collected. Thank you folks.

I look forward to seeing the fruits of this labour as educators and students adopt this resource and add their own chapters to “Our Language, Our Story”!

**Lorne Keon**