

*My vision is that belonging should be at the heart of a fundamental discovery: that we all belong to a common humanity, the human race. We may be rooted in a specific family and culture but we come to this earth to open up to others, to serve them and receive the gifts they bring to us, as well as to all of humanity.*

Jean Vanier, *Becoming Human*

Mid-January always brings the Ontario Catholic School Trustee Association's Professional Development session for trustees. For a day and a half, trustees from across the province come together to learn and celebrate the gift of Catholic education in Ontario. As part of our mass, we were blessed to hear the music that will accompany the theme and celebrations for Catholic Education Week, Walking Forward Together.

There were a wide range of presentations ranging from Religious Education Curriculum to Strategic Planning and a Regional Meeting with other Boards to discuss current issues. The most moving presentation was from Brett Tookenay and Robert Horton from the Seven Generations Education Institute. They led us through an exercise where we had the opportunity to experience the effect of Canadian legislation and policies on the living conditions for our First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities. Elder Gerry Sault described how Indian corn is a mix of different kernels; yellow, white, black and speckled. He explained that if we are to survive together as peoples, we need to learn to grow together like Indian corn. It struck me that his message is very similar to that of Jean Vanier, as you can see in the quote referenced above.

At our January meeting, trustees supported the formation of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee where we can use what we have learned to work with staff on the creation of a plan for how SMCDSB can take steps towards reconciliation within our schools and communities. I am excited to be a part of this committee.

Snow days have wreaked havoc with the St. Dominic Catholic Secondary School Parent Information Night. If you have a child in Grades 7 or 8, I hope that you will be available on Wednesday February 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm to visit St. Dom's and learn about all the great opportunities that await your child when they go there!

God Bless,  
Carol Corriveau-Truchon