



Durham Catholic District School Board



Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School

**Motto: Caritas, Sapientia, Concordia
("Charity, Wisdom, Harmony")**



In the Beginning

September 2001 saw the birth of Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School. It was the beginning of an ongoing tradition of faith and knowledge development. In the 11 years of Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School's existence, countless individuals have worked to create and sustain a vibrant, faith-filled learning community. While working for academic excellence, Notre Dame C.S.S. has also collaborated with the greater community for the good of all, forever striving to realize each individual's God-given potential and to make the world a better place. Looking back at the work of the Notre Dame C.S.S. community, along with that of the local parishes and Catholic organizations, there are many blessings and stories of accomplishment to share and, no doubt, more to come.



The future site of Notre Dame C.S.S.



Construction is underway.



Bishop Anthony G. Meagher presided over the blessing and official opening of Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School on April 5, 2002.

Notre Dame... Mother Mary... A new beginning. The birth of a new school. The journey has begun towards building faith and knowledge. This school was built for this purpose alone. From nothing but land, it was created into a beautiful monument that stands for equality, individuality and a community. A monument that brings together cultures, characters and new identities. It is a place of gathering, a place to meet new and old friends and a place for a new beginning.

The Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School Community

Notre Dame is a unique Catholic high school, sharing physical space with J. Clarke Richardson Public High School, which allows administrators to work collaboratively for the betterment of both school communities.

Many Notre Dame C.S.S. students hail from associate schools: St. Anthony Daniel Catholic School, St. Wilfrid Catholic School, Brother André Catholic School, Mother Teresa Catholic School, St. Catherine of Siena Catholic School and St. Patrick Catholic School.

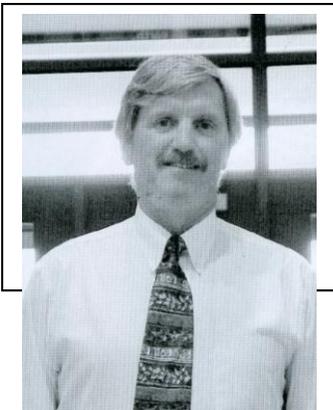
The following parishes are friends and partners of Notre Dame C.S.S. in Catholic education: St. Francis de Sales, St. Isaac Jogues, St. Bernadette's and Holy Redeemer.

Father Roy Roberts was Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School's founding priest. He enjoyed coming to the Notre Dame C.S.S. Three years ago he wrote a glowing tribute about the school Mass and the talent that was exhibited by the Christian band and the choir. He is a great fan of Notre Dame C.S.S.'s young people.

Currently, Father Peter Choi and Father Colman Mruma serve our school community. Father Dave Norris has been coming to our school for a number of years on Thursdays for class Masses. In 2010, Notre Dame C.S.S. began having a 7:30 a.m. Mass before school. This Mass, which is a vital part of the school's Catholic learning community, is well attended by both staff and students.

Throughout the years, founding chaplain Anne Heemskerk and current chaplain Jack English have been providing tremendous spiritual leadership for the Notre Dame C.S.S. community.

First Principal



Founding principal Brian Hughes reminds the school community that at the blessing and official opening of Notre Dame, a candle was lit by all participants to symbolize the light that the school should be to the community. He asserted that the Notre Dame C.S.S. graduate should strive to be a "person for others." Mr. Hughes reminisced that the 2001–2002 Notre Dame school year was "a wild ride ... a whirlwind of events, emotions and growth." Some 850 students and 75 staff lay claim to being the inaugural group to baptize Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School. In their first year, the Christmas outreach tradition was born and more than \$15,000 was collected to purchase food and gifts for needy families in Durham Region. The Terry Fox Run was another successful school endeavour, raising more than \$2,200. Notre Dame C.S.S. is proud to continue these traditions today.

Second Principal



Michael Bak was principal of Notre Dame C.S.S. from 2002 to 2009. During this time, many noteworthy achievements were realized. In 2003, the first graduating class of Notre Dame

C.S.S. crossed the stage and received their diplomas. Also during this school year, the first school play, *Little Shop of Horrors*, was staged, and the first Cougar football and boys lacrosse teams competed on the new school fields. It was a good beginning, indeed. The school continued to establish its library facilities and welcomed a new Media Arts Studio.



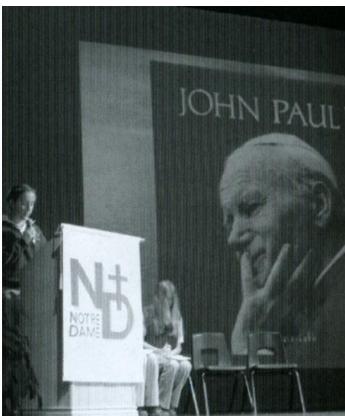
Little Shop of Horrors!



Fast for Life – April 15, 2005

The Chaplaincy team established worthy ongoing traditions, including food drives, fundraising activities, retreats and prayer services. In 2004–2005, Notre Dame C.S.S. raised and donated large sums of money to the Tsunami Relief in Southeast Asia. The school also held a Lenten–Easter food drive for the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

On his departure from Notre Dame C.S.S., Mr. Bak wrote: “With all of the challenges and blessings over the past seven years, I am most certainly pleased with the many accomplishments and I am very grateful to all of the parents, students, staff and community members who have worked so hard to make ND a great place to learn. It goes without saying that I am very sad to be leaving such a wonderful school community with such wonderful people.”

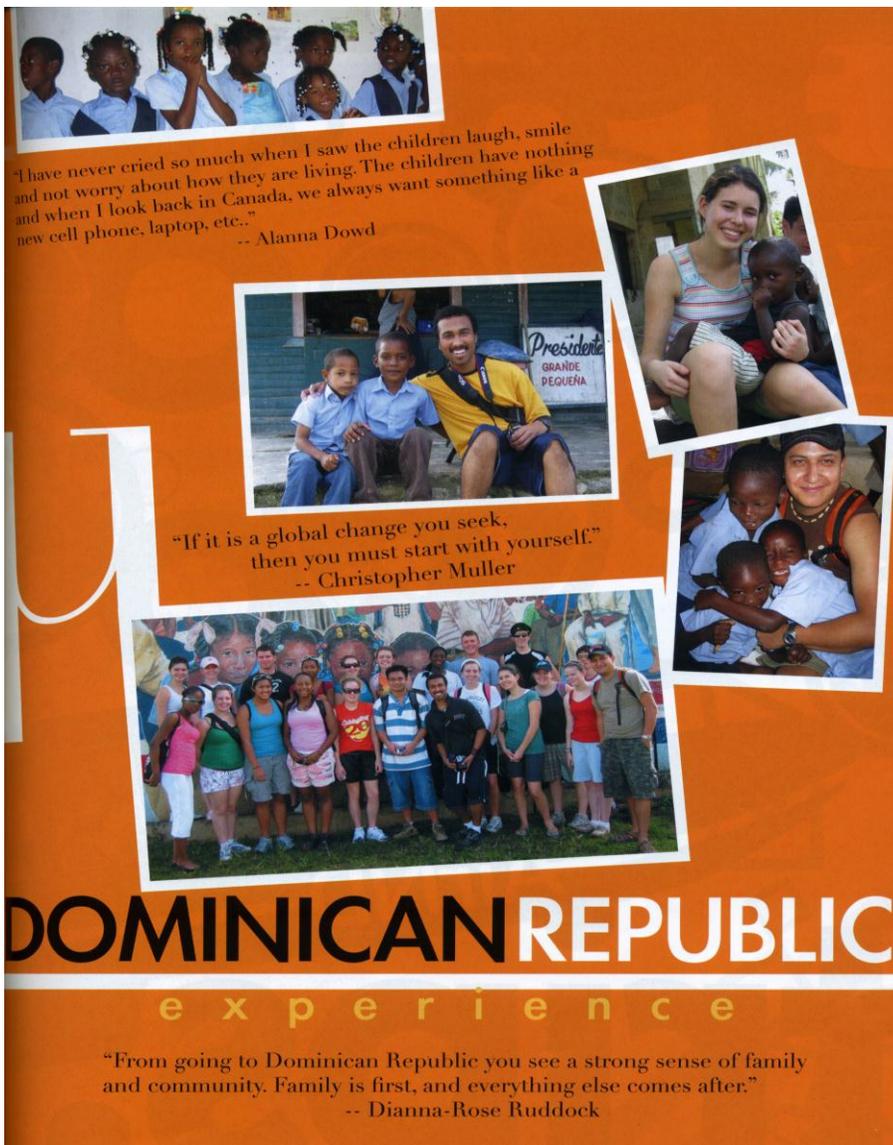


Farewell to Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul II passed away on April 2, 2005. His last audible words, on hearing tens of thousands of young people singing in St. Peter's Square as he lay on his deathbed, were "I have looked for you, now you have come to me, and I thank you." On April 7, 2005, Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School celebrated a Mass in his honour.

The Dominican Republic Experience

Teacher David Partlow recalls: "Twice we were privileged to accompany some of Notre Dame's most inspirational students on a social justice experience in the Dominican Republic. Students flourished with the opportunity to connect with a community whose life experiences create a wholly different reality from ours in Canada. This trip challenged our students to consider their perspectives on what it means be part of a family and part of a global community."



"I have never cried so much when I saw the children laugh, smile and not worry about how they are living. The children have nothing and when I look back in Canada, we always want something like a new cell phone, laptop, etc..."
-- Alanna Dowd

"If it is a global change you seek, then you must start with yourself."
-- Christopher Muller

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
e x p e r i e n c e

"From going to Dominican Republic you see a strong sense of family and community. Family is first, and everything else comes after."
-- Dianna-Rose Ruddock

Athletics over Time

The school mascot, chosen by the student body, is Rudy the Cougar. The cougar is an animal with exceptional quickness, with the instincts of both wisdom and caring. The cougar represents the highest standard of excellence and leadership to which Notre Dame C.S.S. athletes and teams aspire.



Teacher and Track and Field coach Nicholas Kolodzie summarizes the achievements of the Notre Dame C.S.S. Track and Field teams since 2001–2002:



- 70 individual LOSSA gold medals
- 7 team LOSSA gold medals
- 134 individual qualifiers to OFSAA
- 20 teams qualified for OFSAA
- 31 Century Award winners (100 practices in T&F)
- 18 Ironman Award winners (perfect attendance in XC)
- 13 OFSAA individual medals (7G, 3S, 3B)
- 3 OFSAA team medals (1G, 2S)

The Notre Dame C.S.S. Lady Cougars Basketball Program

The Notre Dame C.S.S. Lady Cougars Basketball Program has certainly developed over the course of the school's 10-year history. Through hard work and dedication, Notre Dame C.S.S. athletes represented their school well and consistently demonstrated that hard work will lead to success. The girls have participated in the LOSSA AAAA championships for the past six consecutive years and won gold medals in 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009. Many of these years saw both junior and senior teams represent the school in these finals. From 2007 to 2011, the senior team was also rated as one of the

top five schools in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), and this past season saw Notre Dame C.S.S. listed as the top GTA team.

The team has achieved success on the team level, and many individuals have also gone on to experience success outside of the Notre Dame community. We are very excited to see what the next 10 years will bring for our Notre Dame Lady Cougars!

—*Rose Booker*

Building a School in Kenya: A Success Story

Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School's Leadership Class began the tradition of building schools with Free the Children; since then, the Social Justice Club, under the leadership of many staff members, has taken over the reins.

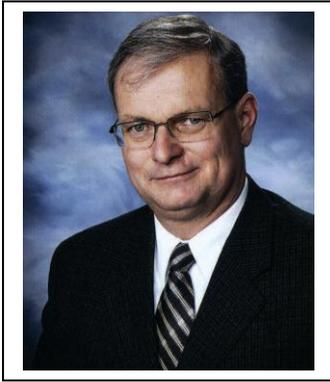


2008 was a banner year. Notre Dame C.S.S. raised \$17,000 for Free the Children to build a school in Kenya.

A Justice Pep Rally ended with students voting for the country where they wanted to build the school. The highlight of the fundraising was the Free the Children 5K Walk, in which over 700 students participated. With purple ribbons indicating support and participation, students did not let the cold and wind curb their enthusiasm. The Walk ended in the northwest field with a cup of rice for lunch, giving students a small taste of the one meal a day (or less) on which so many must survive in the global South. Live entertainment was also provided.

—*Dianne Dias*

Third Principal



Lon Coghlan became principal of Notre Dame C.S.S. in the fall of 2009. The school population has grown to 1600 students and a staff of 130. Academic excellence remains strong, with overall OSSLT (Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test) and EQAO (Education Quality Accountability Office) results continuing to rise. Under Mr. Coghlan's leadership, the many traditions of Notre Dame C.S.S. continue to flourish while new ones are established. Some of these important activities include theatrical productions, mental health awareness initiatives, the Terry Fox Run, Canadian Mosaic, the Blood Donor Clinic, March for Life events, and the introduction of the Specialist High Skills Major and Dual Credit programs.

Drama at Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School

Teacher/Director Caroline Jover-Gubbins comments on the 2011 school production:

“Notre Dame’s spring 2011 production of *Disney’s Aladdin Jr.* was an enormous success. Not only did we get rave reviews from the elementary school matinees, the evening performances were almost at capacity. Some favourite moments of the show included the love story of Aladdin and Princess Jasmine, the comical evilness of Jafar and Iago, the audience dance-off with the Palace Guards, and of course the wildly animated Genie of the lamp. The stellar performances of the students in the cast and crew really shone through, providing the magic and fantasy of the show. It is productions such as these that showcase the amazing spectrum of artistic talent of the students here at Notre Dame.”



Disney’s Aladdin Jr., Spring 2011

Terry Fox Run

Guidance teacher Dave Flynn comments on the Notre Dame C.S.S. tradition of the Terry Fox Run:

“In 2001, Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School held its first ever Terry Fox Run. The biannual event has not only been a great source of school spirit, but has placed Notre Dame among the top schools in the province for funds raised. To date, the Notre Dame community has raised over \$120,000 for the Terry Fox Foundation. We are most grateful to those involved for their continued support and look forward to further participation in this worthy cause. Thank you to all!”



Blood Donor Clinics at Notre Dame

In 2006, Notre Dame C.S.S. contacted Canadian Blood Services to hold its first Blood Donor Clinic, inviting its neighbouring school, J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate, to join in the effort. By 2010, student interest and support for the clinic had grown to the point where it was expanded to a two-day event.

Since its inception, the Notre Dame-J. Clarke Richardson clinics have collected well over 500 units of blood from students and staff. This generosity has enabled up to 1,500 patients to get the blood products they urgently need for a variety of medical treatments, and has helped to save many lives. Students must be at least 17 years old to give blood,

so most are donating for the first time, although several dozen Grade 11 students gave blood during the 2011 clinic.

Other than helping to meet the always urgent demand for blood, one of the main goals of the clinic is to have students become lifelong blood donors, rolling up their sleeves up to six times a year to give the gift of life.

—Michael Cicci

2009–2010 Canadian Mosaic

Pope John Paul II inspired the school community in a speech he made at Bird’s Hill Park in Manitoba on September 16, 1984:

“Remember, O Canada, that the greatest richness of your multicultural character is to be able to reach out and help others – your brothers and sisters in need. This is what makes faith possible, this is what love requires. In the name of love, I urge that the openness shown to so many immigrants and refugees of ethnic minorities and the generous reception given to them, should continue to characterize and enrich Canada in the future as in the past.”



A dance from the Philippines

Notre Dame’s 7th Canadian Mosaic was a great success. Over 300 Notre Dame C.S.S. students, teachers, parents and friends enjoyed a multicultural evening of fun, food, artifacts, costumes, dancing and singing. This pavilion represented France/Quebec, Britain, Italy, Spanish-speaking countries, Ireland, India, Greece, African nations, the Middle East, the Far East, Portugal, the Caribbean and the Philippines. Many thanks to the students, teachers and parents who made it all happen.

Mental Health Awareness Day 2011



Teachers Nicki Gelinis and Michelle Tonna lead our students in their work on Mental Health Awareness. The thoughts of so many of our Notre Dame C.S.S. students dedicated to the cause of stamping out the stigma of mental illness are summed up by Rosalynn Carter:

“People with mental problems are our neighbours. They are members of our congregations, members of our families; they are everywhere in this country. If we ignore their cries for help we will be continuing to participate in the anguish from which those cries for help come. A problem of this magnitude will not go away, and because of our spiritual commitments, we are compelled to take action.”

March for Life!

Teacher Thomas Partlow recalls:

“The Pro-Life movement at Notre Dame C.S.S. began in earnest approximately seven years ago when religion teachers Mr. Stokes and Ms. Burchartz started a Pro-Life Club and took the group of interested students to Ottawa to participate in the annual March for Life. The following year, the Pro-Life Club participated in an overnight Pro-Life dinner and conference as well as the March for Life itself.”

Teacher Rhonda Burchartz writes:

“The students involved were exceptionally passionate about learning about the pro-life movement and wanted to learn more. They continued their efforts every year at the school and wanted to do presentations for their classmates and the rest of the school when they realized the importance of respecting all life from the moment of conception to natural death. They understood and wanted to continue to pass on the important message to all who would listen. Chantal Mitchell stands out in my mind as one of the most passionate about the issue. She helped create and present much of the information we have today for the groups. She wanted to hear more and wanted to be

involved in the presentations. She went online and did her own research and suggested we hold a day of silence.”

Every second year, students take part, over the course of two days, in the Prayer Vigil, Pro-Life Mass and March.

Notre Dame C.S.S. has also sponsored pro-life speakers, including Angelina Steenstra of Silent No More and Teresa Gilbert from Toronto Right to Life, to address all grade levels at Notre Dame. Additionally, pro-life presentations have been made to the Grade 9 classes.

Teacher Janice Thurston weighs in:

Our Notre Dame Pro-Life group, which has merged as part of the Social Justice Club these past two years, has become a familiar and celebrated group on Parliament Hill, waving our colourful banner of “Notre Dame for Life.” This past year, our simple banner message sent a far more powerful one when students such as Chantal Mitchell, Karen Marshall, Brian Malone, Megan Henry, Myriah Jordan, Mailee Teo, Tino Chikoore and Mark Gil Velasquez were photographed carrying the banner as they marched the streets of Ottawa – a photo that was projected at the Campaign Life’s National Youth Conference. Our students were publicly acknowledged in recognition of their efforts last year on Parliament Hill in front of Canadians from coast to coast.

Most recently, Pro-Life Club members Taylor Barrett, Fallon Hayes, Brandon Lucey, Sabrina Lucey and Laura Pagnello strengthened our relationship with our parish community by sharing with them at all Masses the history of our group and its message, which Father Peter and Father Coleman called a “quintessentially Catholic and often under-represented message.” The community was invited to sign our newest banner under the premise that Notre Dame students will be symbolically carrying the community along with them during this year’s rally – one that could not have been accomplished without their support. Our stunning banner with the message “A person’s a person no matter how small” was the work of many hands and a lot of love, and showcases how truly proud our community is of these students. As one parishioner remarked while signing the banner, “I see these Notre Dame students go back and forth in their uniforms each day on their way to and from school and thought nothing of it, but this makes me so proud... I’ll think about it each time I see them.”

Perhaps the most powerful recognition, however, comes from an ever-growing group of graduates who carry en masse the education and support for justice that they have received at Notre Dame C.S.S. out into a post-secondary and increasingly secular world.

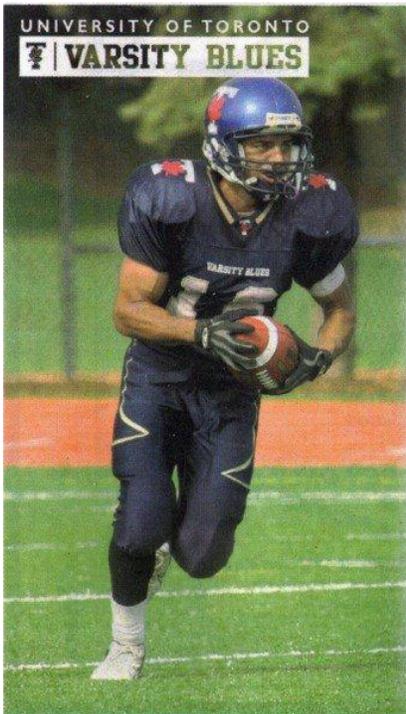
Famous Alumni

Music teacher Clifford Azavedo brings the success of a former student to mind:



A native of Pickering, tenor Dylan Hayden is a graduate of Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School and recently completed a Queen's University Bachelor of Music Degree in Vocal Performance. Studying under baritone Bruce Kelly, Dylan was a member of the Canadian Operatic Arts Academy in 2010 and served as the president of the Queen's Student Opera Company from 2009 to 2012. In 2010 he won the Canadian National Exhibition's Rising Star competition and represented Ontario at the national level in Calgary, placing third.

Matt D'Sousa graduated from Notre Dame C.S.S. in 2004. Seen here, he is playing football for the University of Toronto. Matt works as a police officer in York Region.



Akeem Foster graduated from Notre Dame C.S.S. in 2006 and later graduated from St. Francis Xavier University, where he played football for four seasons. Akeem is a member of the B.C. Lions football team.

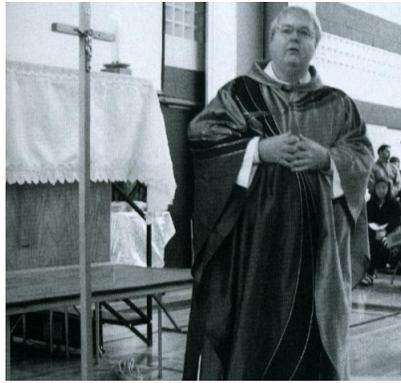


Father Roy Roberts



Father Roy has been a good friend to the Notre Dame Catholic School community since the school opened. He has joined Notre Dame C.S.S. in times of mourning, celebration and laughter, reminding everyone that true strength comes not from individualism and independence, but from the ability to lean on and count on one another.

Thank you, Father Roy!



Father Roy presiding at a school Mass

Then and Now

Lisa McNeil and Lori Najera reminisce about the early days of Notre Dame C.S.S.:

“In September 2001, Notre Dame opened without a cafeteria, library or gym! All three areas were still under construction. The Media Arts classroom doubled as the cafeteria and food was brought from Exeter High School. Students were able to purchase food in the current Foods classroom and then cross the hall to enjoy the ambiance of the Media arts studio and the sawdust from the Tech shops! The floors in the gym were not in place, so students played outdoor sports until November. There were no keys for teachers, so custodians were kept busy unlocking and locking classrooms throughout the day. There was no library for the entire first year; staff donated the vast majority of the books that now grace the shelves. We’ve come a long way, Notre Dame!”

Former student and current teacher Janice Thurston comments:

“As a student in the first graduating class of Notre Dame, I can attest that with one quick glance down ND’s busiest hallway, The Street, much has changed to Notre Dame these past 10 years. Ten years ago, Notre Dame’s halls were dotted with Denis O’Connor and St. Mary uniforms in addition to those of Notre Dame. The halls did not have televisions, beautiful encased artwork, and most certainly not a hallway of successful graduates and stellar achievements. This was a Notre Dame before the cafeteria was fully finished, before portables had taken residency, and even before Tim Hortons had drawn students outdoors at lunch. Now, as a teacher at Notre Dame, I witness every day something familiar and constant: the community. Ten years ago, what made Notre Dame come alive was a group of students who had so many passions and creative ideas, paired with a staff that jumped in, giving just as much as each and every student. I admired these teachers who always agreed to try, not knowing the hours or the outcome; I admire them still. Now, passing through the halls of Notre Dame, I see that the visible change is

history; when I hear student announcements proclaiming an exciting event, fantastic fundraiser and brand new club with various teacher contacts, it reminds me that some things never change.”

Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School Defined

Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School’s motto is translated as Charity, Wisdom, Harmony. It is a school community committed to excellence in education and especially to these values. The name “Notre Dame” reflects the devotion of the Ajax-Pickering community to Mary, the mother of Jesus and of the Catholic Church. A group of parents, students and Board representatives chose this name because Mary is characterized by her devotion to God and family. We look to Mary as a model and intercessor.

The Notre Dame C.S.S. crest consists of a circle surrounding a cross, a reminder that we are united as one and created in the image and likeness of God. The cross symbolizes our commitment to the teachings of the Catholic Church and those of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The school colours of purple and grey were chosen to be distinctive and to mark “royalty.” We at Notre Dame must always strive to live our lives with honour and dignity.

Our Patron Saint

Notre Dame, Our Lady. Our school has the distinct honour of being named after the Mother of Jesus. In Mary, we see a courageous young woman who did not completely understand what the Angel Gabriel was telling her. Her response was “Let it be done according to your will.”

We witnessed her suffering at the foot of the cross. Mary was in the upper room as the Holy Spirit descended and the Church began. Mary was a true disciple.

“Mary is not a woman protected from the demands of faith in daily living. She is a woman with her feet planted firmly on the earth, Mary of Nazareth, the new Eve, the new Mother of the living, the woman whose risk in faith first made Christ present among us.”—*Bishop Matthew H. Clark of Rochester, New York*

As a community, we implore Mary to guide us in all that we do as students, educators, administration, custodial and secretarial staff. We strive to follow her example as the faithful servant. As she is our Mother, we seek her guidance and peacefulness.

School Prayer

O loving God,
Thank you for the many blessings
And unconditional love you have bestowed upon us.
Give us the strength to overcome temptation.
Inspire us to act as leaders in charity,
Awaken our minds to your infinite wisdom,
And help us to work together in harmony.
Guide us to live for others before ourselves
And to serve others as you so greatly serve us.
Empower us to grow as individuals
And to unite as a community,
With the fire of your love in our hearts.
Amen.

Notre Dame, Our Lady, pray for us.

(Writer's Craft class, Fall 2004)

Principals

Brian Hughes (2001–2002)

Mike Bak (2002–2009)

Lon Coghlan (2009–present)

Contributors:

Lon Coghlan

Kelly Denomme

John DiVizio

Krista Zupan

Jack English

Clifford Azavedo

David Lamontagne

Terry Kelly

Rose Booker

Lisa McNeil

Dianne Dias

Rhonda Burchartz

David Partlow

Thomas Partlow

Dave Flynn

Sebastien Lelasseux

Janice Thurston
Carolyn Jover-Gubbins
Michael Cicci
Lori Najera
Nicholas Kolodzie