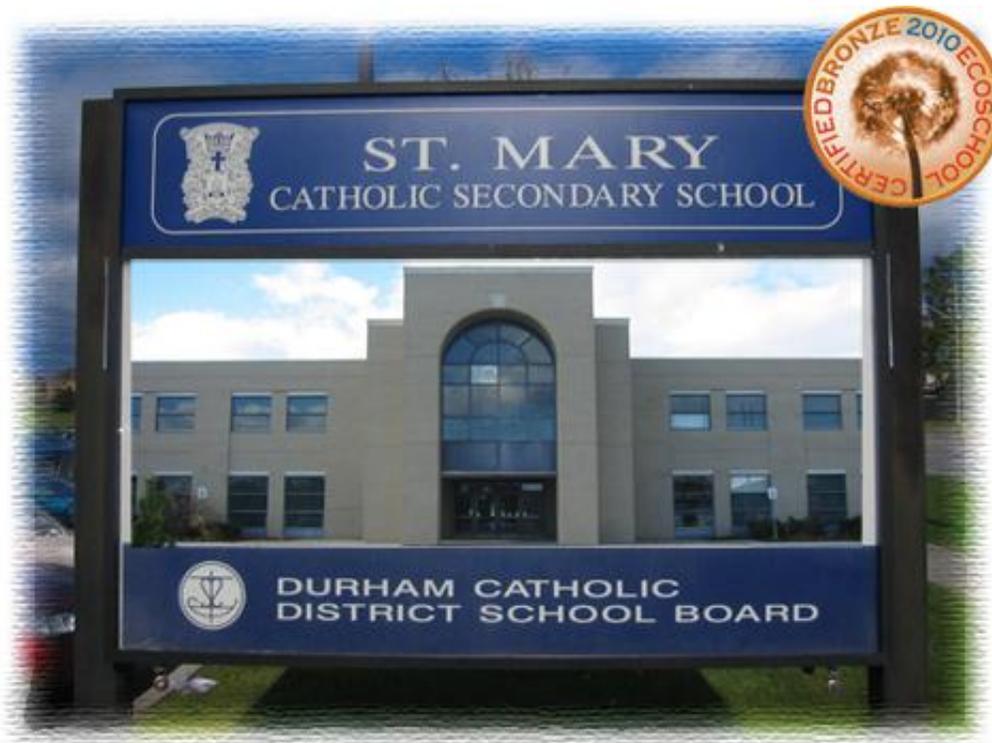




Durham Catholic District School Board

## ***St. Mary Catholic Secondary School***

**Motto: AMARE ET SERVIRE  
("We are Called to Love and Serve")**



### **In the Beginning**

In September 1987, Holy Cross Catholic School, Oshawa, opened its doors to share facilities with the newly founded St. Mary Catholic Secondary School under the leadership of principal John Vesters. Some 227 Grade 9 and 10 students were bused via Hwy 401 to Simcoe St. in Oshawa while construction of St. Mary on Whites Road was in progress. St. Mary students and staff had a makeshift cafeteria in the basement of Holy Cross church next door. Before and after lunch, the cafeteria served as the school's music room. There

were no after-school activities during the first year, as the day ended at 2:30 sharp and every student left by bus to go home to Pickering.



*St. Mary's first class, and staff, in the Holy Cross parking lot, circa September 1987*

The following September, these early pioneers, along with a new contingent of Grade 9 students, moved into the new facilities. St. Mary Catholic Secondary School became home to students living in the City of Pickering as well as those who commuted daily from as far away as Uxbridge. The staff was comprised solely of experienced teachers, the majority of whom came from Archbishop Denis O'Connor Catholic High School in Ajax. There were also teachers from Monsignor Paul Dwyer Catholic High School and several from elementary schools.

St. Mary was the first new high school constructed by the Durham Catholic District School Board since full provincial funding of Catholic education came into effect in 1984. It was an up-to-date secondary school with broad hallways, an expansive cafeteria, a triple gym, and fully equipped science and computer labs. These were all new experiences for a staff that had begun in the days before full funding of Catholic schools.

Marilyn LeBrun became the school's second principal in 1991, at a time when both the City of Pickering and St. Mary itself were expanding very rapidly. What was once a very spacious building with extra classrooms quickly became a campus that ultimately included 40 portables. During these early years, the staff ballooned from 15 teachers to over 100.

## Welcome to St. Mary C.S.S.



Home of the Monarchs

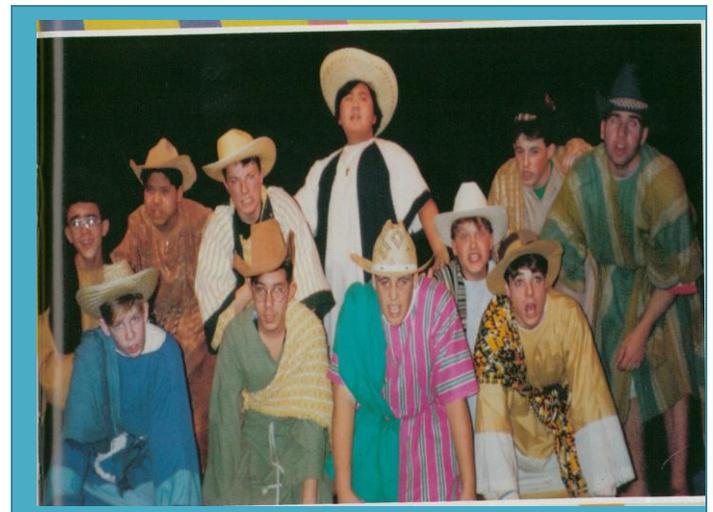
Hiring quality staff on that scale in such a short time frame was a crucial and gruelling job for the school's administration, a job they did with great success. The staff developed a reputation for being a collection of intellectually stimulating and motivating teachers as well as professional, conscientious and dedicated educators.

Being located in Pickering, St. Mary reflected the multicultural community that makes up the area. An in-school survey conducted in the early 1990s

identified nearly 70 different nationalities and even more languages spoken by students and their families at home. The school welcomed students from a number of different faiths into the St. Mary family as well. Many Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Protestant families chose St. Mary, a Catholic school, for their children's education because they wanted them to be exposed to religious ideas and values as an integral part of their education.

In September 1998, the school welcomed its third principal, Michael Bak. The years between 1998 and 2002 were in many ways "the best of times and the worst of times" at St. Mary. In September 1998, the province and the teacher associations were engaged in contractual negotiations, resulting in job action and a reduction in extra-curricular activities. The bright side to these challenges was the incredible leadership shown by the students and staff to make the best of things. Students played a major role in organizing spirit assemblies, dances and talent shows.

Community coaches assisted our sports teams and the St. Mary football team advanced to the Metro Bowl finals, playing before a crowd of thousands who came to cheer. The girls hockey team also made it to the OFSAA finals. Also, the school bands and improv

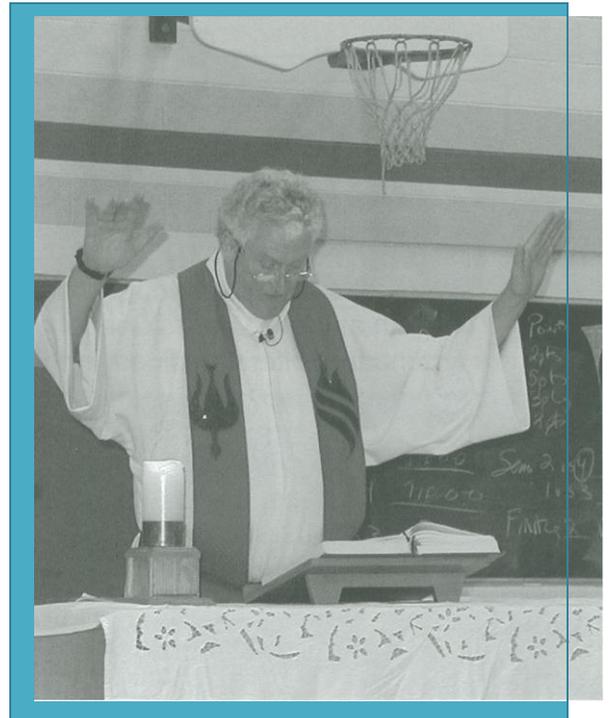


teams continued their outstanding performances, representing St. Mary and the region at the nationals. When extra-curricular activities returned in full in the fall of 2000, the St. Mary Monarchs were hungry to get back on the fields and had impressive records to prove it. The senior girls soccer team finished with LOSSA gold medals and OFSSA bronze medals, making this the start of many successful soccer years. The boys' football team also won LOSSA gold and continued on to play in the Metro Bowl at the Rogers Centre (then called SkyDome). The school celebrated buyouts, spirit week, Moolapalooza, BBQs and much more.

It was also a time of increased enrolment, a split timetable (with senior students starting early and juniors starting later and finishing later), crowded hallways, sharing of lockers and lineups everywhere. St. Mary topped all schools in the Board with over 1950 students and 43 portables. The result was an addition to the main structure of the school, with a new wing and a weight room facility added to the gym. Again, both students and staff rose to the challenge of construction during school time and were soon the beneficiaries of the much-needed new space.

Academically, students at St. Mary continued to take advantage of the excellent teaching and programs offered at the school. The mandatory Grade 10 literacy test was implemented and students wrote the test in the gym. The province also reduced the number of years required for a secondary school diploma from five years to four. This resulted in a compressed curriculum beginning in Grade 9 and a "double cohort" whereby a Grade 12 cohort and a Grade 13 cohort graduated in the same year.

Meanwhile, the senior soccer teams (both indoor and outdoor) had continued successes year after year and won many LOSSA and OFSSA events. Through the good times and the challenges, the outstanding leadership, dedication and commitment from the students, parents and staff enabled the St. Mary community to continue its very rich tradition of "love and service" combined with academic excellence and success.



In 2003, the St. Mary community welcomed a new principal, Shelly Roy. Mrs. Roy had been a vice-principal at the school the previous year. During her time as principal, the school underwent a number of changes and many new traditions were started. The 2003–2004 school year saw the school undergo some physical changes. The blank hallway walls were given colour as each department in the school was given the job of representing itself. Student designers worked with teachers to come up with some great ideas that continue to grace the hallways today. Also in 2003, 33 St. Mary students travelled to Europe, with stops in France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein.



The St. Mary student council was very active during these school years. Through their ongoing activities and events, such as school dances and spirit assemblies, St. Mary was able to raise over \$5,000 for various charities. The school community itself continued to live Christ's message as it raised even more money and goods for its school outreach, 25-hour famine, and the band play-a-thon to raise money for Warchild and for needy families at Christmas. This sense of community and charity would set the standard for years to come. St. Mary student council also had a successful fundraiser that saw students cut their hair for wigs for children being treated for cancer.



The St. Mary community would also continue its tradition as an athletic power. In 2003, our tennis team won LOSSA gold, the girls hockey team won both LOSSA and OSSFA, the Junior Boys hockey team won LOSSA gold, the Senior Boys hockey team won LOSSA silver, Senior Boys basketball won LOSSA silver, Senior Girls soccer won LOSSA gold, and the Senior Boys football team won LOSSA gold for the fourth consecutive time.

The school community was also very active showcasing its talents in Café Cabaret. Our improv team team placed eighth out of 300 teams in the Improv Nationals and the drama program produced a show called *Spend a Little Time*, which highlighted the various talents of the St. Mary community. The award-winning concert band continued its tradition of seasonal concerts, and 2003 saw the start of the St. Mary choir. The school also promoted the importance of Remembrance Day and Black History Month, with activities leading up to powerful and moving assemblies. The last year for an OAC class was 2003; the school had to close its doors on that chapter of education in Ontario.



During the 2004–2005 school year, the school community continued to be extremely vibrant and active. Once again, St. Mary students went out all over the globe to get a taste of different cultures and places. Students travelled to the Dominican Republic, New York, Greece, England and France.

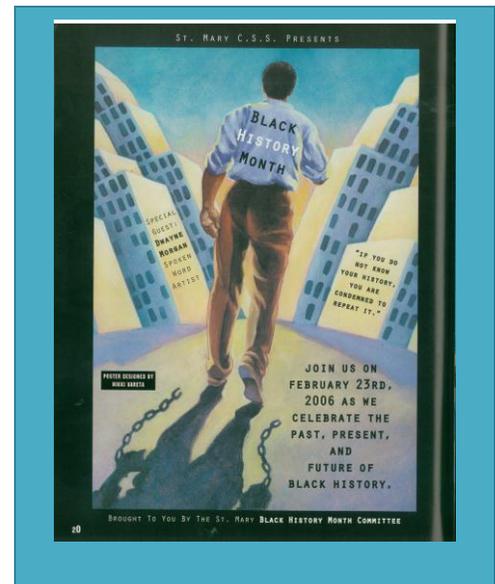
The spirit of giving was clearly seen in an outpouring of help for the people of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, with a massive food and clothing drive. Student Council continued to fundraise as well, raising \$5,000 for various charities. The community also held another successful famine fundraiser and Christmas basket program.



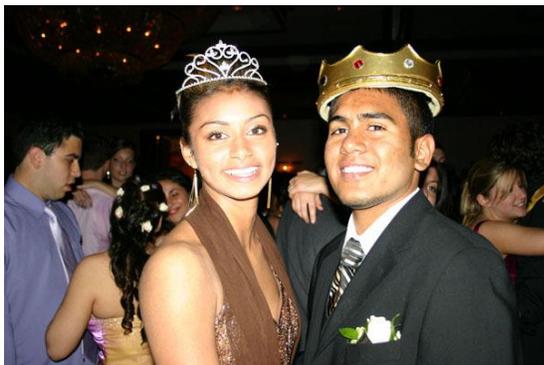
The school continued to find athletic success as the Varsity football team won LOSSA silver,

the tennis team won LOSSA silver and bronze, the Senior Boys soccer team won LOSSA gold, The Senior Boys basketball team won LOSSA silver, Junior Boys hockey won LOSSA silver, Senior Boys hockey won LOSSA gold, Varsity Girls hockey won LOSSA gold and OFSSA silver.

The school community was also very active in showcasing its artistic talents. In 2004, students put on *The Wizard of Oz*, had numerous art shows, performed at the Sears Drama Festival, had another successful Café Cabaret, and had its first-ever Dance Showcase. The award-winning concert bands continued to perform in their annual concerts. In 2005 was our first Arts Fest, which was done to promote the arts and recognize those students who excelled in different artistic disciplines.



The 2005–2006 school year saw continued success in the arts, athletics and academics and in living the message of “to love and to serve.” Student Council raised a record \$10,000 for charity and students travelled to New York, England, Scotland and Disneyland. The arts department put on two successful shows, *The British Invasion/America Strikes Back* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, and continued to impress and amaze the school with their concerts, art/photography shows and ongoing participation in the annual Remembrance Day and Black History Month assemblies. Our athletes once again found LOSSA victory in Boys’ hockey and in Junior Girls soccer. Many of our other teams also finished strong in numerous tournaments.



Dr. Mary Curran was a blessing to the staff and students of St. Mary C.S.S. when she became principal at the start of the second semester in the 2005–2006 school year. She created a very collaborative learning environment with her administrative team and with her staff. Her decision making was always supported by strong faith and intentionally kept within the meaning of our school motto, “to love and to serve.”

The school confirmed and expanded its strong beliefs in a safe school environment and ensured that Restorative Practices were being used at St. Mary.

Another major construction project began on the school's west wing in the fall of 2007. The school also developed the St. Mary Cardinal Rules and placed these rules throughout the school, as well as creating many murals on the school walls depicting important school values that remind us daily to see God in ourselves and others.

St. Mary also continued to establish itself as a collaborative learning environment. Teachers and students shone through many committees and school events. In 2008, the school started a Going Green Team with 30 students to help our school focus on the importance of the environment. The Harmony Group was also established in 2008. It hosted a multicultural night with eight different cultures setting up pavilions that included photos, activities and food for community members to experience. Over 300 students and family members attended the first Multicultural Night, which has become an annual event. Students were very enthusiastic about their pavilions and about sharing their traditions with the community. The school's chaplaincy team also formed the Super Council in 2007 so that the numerous committees and social justice teams could work together on school-wide initiatives. The St. Mary ACT (Assisting the Community Together) Committee had a great year in 2008–2009 in its service to the St. Mary community. ACT organized the 25-hour Famine, a bake sale, and home room change collections. Donations collected were given to ShareLife, The Refuge homeless shelter in Oshawa, Canadian Food for Children, and two schools in the Philippines for their breakfast programs. ACT members also participated in "Trick or Treat So Kids Can Eat" at a local grocery store and helped with a new Anti-Bullying Week initiative at St. Mary. The St. Mary Celebrating Excellence Committee was formed to help acknowledge students for excellence in academic achievement and extra-curricular activities.



In April 2007, the Canada and World Studies department took 32 St. Mary Students to witness the rededication of the restored Vimy Ridge monument commemorating the 90th anniversary of the battle. Both Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Queen Elizabeth II participated in the rededication. One of our students, Frank Granata, met the queen during the ceremony.

Sports continued to flourish during this time at St. Mary. All the St. Mary teams exhibited Monarch pride during their games. The Senior Girls soccer team earned a gold medal at LOSSA at the end of its undefeated season and earned a silver medal at OFSSA in Hamilton in 2008. The Senior Boys hockey team took gold at LOSSA and later earned a bronze medal at OFSSA. The Junior Boys hockey team also took gold at LOSSA in 2009.

The Arts department continued to flourish. Senior jazz bands and the Senior Concert Band brought home medals from the Atlantic Band Festival (2006–2007) and Grade 12 Media Arts organized the first Media Arts Film Fest. The Art department presented great shows, including *Alphabet*. Grade 12 art students presented *The Laramie Project* in April

2009. The Grade 12 drama entitled *Life Sentences* included a memorable dance number from Chicago – “Cell Block Tango”. Many of the students involved in the arts programs at the school participated in field trips to New York City and Los Angeles to enhance their learning experiences.

In the fall of 2009, John Mullins became the school’s sixth principal. Despite an era of declining enrolment, St. Mary C.S.S. still shines as a beacon of Catholic education in Pickering. The school’s football, soccer, hockey and track and field teams are perennial LOSSA champions and OFSSA

competitors. The school’s Arts department remains a vibrant cornerstone in the culture of the school, with a multitude of theatrical productions, band concerts and musicals.



Students continue to broaden their horizons, with recent trips to New York City and Chicago, among many other locations.

St. Mary has also expanded the programming it offers its students by introducing four Specialist High Skills Majors in the areas of Transportation, Business, Arts and Culture, and the Non-Profit Sector. The school continues to celebrate its rich religion retreat program and is actively involved in support and fundraising for many charities, including relief work for Haiti in the aftermath of the earthquake, Canadian Food for Children, Learning for Hope, Development and Peace, Scott Mission, ShareLife, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society of Toronto. In the spring of 2012, the Durham Catholic District School Board announced that as of September 2013, St. Mary would become a host school for the Board's French Immersion program.

The St Mary "family" continues to thank God for the many blessings received during our school's history and strives each day to live out the school's motto, *Amare et servire*.

### **Our Patron Saint**

Holy Mary, Our Lady, Mother of our Lord. Through the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was born our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Through her Assumption, Mary became Queen of Heaven and Mother of the Church. Like us, Mary was redeemed by her Son. During her life, she co-operated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Saviour.

Mary is both model of faith and charity and mother of all Christians in the order of grace. All grace comes to us through Christ and his cross, and Mary is mother to Jesus and all who are united to him in baptism. Mary is first among Christ's followers to share in her Son's bodily resurrection. At the end of time we, too, will be united with our glorified bodies. Mary's assumption, body and soul, into heaven thus shows the baptized their glorified destiny in Christ. She is a sign of hope and comfort to all who follow her Son and his Gospel toward the fullness of life.

In his Apostolic Letter *The Rosary of the Virgin Mary*, Pope John Paul II invited us to grow in conformity with Christ by contemplating his face together with Mary, through the Rosary. As we come to know Christ in her care, we can be sure that she will obtain for us the Holy Spirit's help on our faith journey.

—Tony Cosentino, *Who Is My Mother? Reflecting on Mary's Role in Our Lives*, *Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love, Fortitude, Catholic Character Themes: Community, Compassion, Discipleship, Reverence, Solidarity*. 2007

## **School Prayer**

Loving God,  
with grateful hearts, we acknowledge all the blessings  
you have bestowed upon this community in your glory.  
We know that everything that comes from You is good.  
Through all the challenges and opportunities we are presented with,  
we look to You and depend upon You to be our Guide.  
Whenever we are in doubt, help us to seek You.  
Continue to bless our school, that it will be an inspiring centre for learning,  
new discovery and the pursuit for wisdom and faith.  
Grant us opportunities to develop our special gifts  
that we may love and serve those in our community  
and those who are in need around the world.  
Give us the courage to always do what is right  
and enable us with strength to forgive others and ourselves.  
Help us to accept ourselves and others unconditionally.  
Enable us to fight through temptations  
and show us the way to everlasting happiness and joy.  
Teach us to be like our Mother Mary, our patron saint.  
Accept our daily praise and continue to love us unconditionally.  
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.  
Amen.

### **Principals**

John Vesters (1987–1991)  
Marylin LeBrun (1991–1997)  
Paul Pulla (1997–1998)  
Michael Bak (1998–2003)  
Shelley Roy (2003–2005)  
Mary Curran (2005–2009)  
John Mullins (2009–present)

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