

**Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic  
Education  
Regional Meeting Highlights - Dec. 2023**





## OPENING PRAYER

+God of Hope,

We praise you during this season of  
Advent and always.

Draw us into your light as we journey.

May we be filled wh trust.

May our anticipation of the joyful  
coming of your Son ever increase.

May our hope grow with each passing  
moment.

We ask this through your Son, Our  
Saviour

# OAPCE Advent Retreat: Teresa Hartnett

## **An Overview of our Retreat:**

**During our Virtual meetings with all the Regions across the province we had an opportunity to listen and participate in a wonderful retreat lead by T. Hartnett. This is an overview from it:**

**It was a joy to spend time with the many members of the OAPCE who joined together to share an Advent retreat and prepare for Christ's coming at Christmas. The retreat was meant to let us all pause remind ourselves of the reason for the season. Together we took a brief period of time to spend some time with God during Advent. God sent his son to be with us, knowing he would pay the price for our sins and his sacrifice opened eternity with God for each of us. Christmas is a time to rejoice and show gratitude.**



## OAPCE Advent Retreat: Teresa Hartnett - recap

During the retreat, we reflected on the Holy Family, who, by example, model for every family how to live a life steeped in faith in God. Both Mary and Joseph said yes to God's request to become active participants in Jesus' life. Mary to carry him in her womb and Joseph to support both Mary and Jesus. From the start they trusted in God's plan and, despite times of fear and unknown, they continued to find joy in the birth of their son, his growth into childhood and eventually adulthood. They knew his purpose, but they focused on their faith in God and the joy they felt in being parents and therefore, like all of us, the first and foremost educators of the child Jesus.

The gift of life we have each received is something to cherish during the Christmas season when we focus on the birth of Christ. We sometimes fail to see the gifts that first Christmas brought to us and continues to bring to us each time we celebrate. What are the gifts? Love - God created us to love and loves us, He taught us that love comes at a price, but it is gift - it fills us and sustains us. Life - the gift given to us by God, who asks us to share it with others and, he gives us eternal life. Joy - God's love and gift of life brings us joy and a sense of peace. All these gifts are given to us freely with no price, but are priceless.

## OAPCE Advent Retreat: Teresa Hartnett - recap

The decorations we use at Christmas are reminders of the original Christmas, yet we do not often make the connections. God's LOVE is expressed at Christmas in our nativity scene, red bows, giving gifts, and serving one another. The gift of LIFE, that is now open to eternity, is expressed at Christmas in evergreen trees, wreaths, lights, and candles. The gift is JOY, a sense of well-being apart from life circumstances, is expressed in music, angels, and bright colors.

So take the time as you decorate and plug in the lights, as you sing and light candles to take a moment to thank God for these gifts of Christmas. To thank God for the gift of the Eucharist that continues to feed us and for the gift of eternity, which will be ours when we live with faith, trust and obedience to God, who loves us beyond measure, in the same way as Mary and Joseph.

Merry Christmas to all!

*Teresa Hartnett (M.R.E.) is in her 20<sup>th</sup> year as Director of Family Ministry for the Diocese of Hamilton. She has her Masters in Religious Education from St. Augustine's Seminary/University of Toronto, a degree in Kinesiology from McMaster University, a Bachelor of Education from Brock University, and is certified in a number of family, counselling, marriage and relationship programs. She has been the Executive Director of Birthright Pregnancy Service in Hamilton for 35 years and in 2004 implemented and now oversees Project Rachel in the Hamilton Diocese. She is also the author of Nighttime Devotional for Teen Girls, a book designed to assist teens navigate life using their faith as a foundational tool.*

# OAPCE 85 in 2024!

# Engage -Advocate - Enhance

**Our theme this year is “Celebrate OAPCE 85: A Yearlong Celebration of Change, Commitment, and Catholic Education”. As we celebrate this milestone anniversary of OAPCE, we recognize the importance of parent leadership in shaping the entire education landscape in Ontario. As part of our celebration, we are excited to unveil our new logo, symbolizing our unwavering dedication to families in Catholic education.**

**Stay Connected: Visit the new OAPCE website [www.oapce.org](http://www.oapce.org) to access the launch of our new and engaging blog series. OAPCE is thrilled to introduce its freshly launched website, coinciding with a significant milestone – the celebration of our 85th anniversary!**

**This newly revamped digital hub is designed to empower parents with a wealth of resources, essential information, and advocacy tools while emphasizing the critical role parents hold as the primary educators of their children.**



## OAPCE Provincial Update for all!

**\*New Partner Resources on our website including ICE new Family Life Education Curriculum:**

**<https://iceont.ca/new-family-life-education-curriculum-and-support-resources/>**

**\*Look at our new Regional Webpages and find your region's info!**

**\*Co-Executive Directors had the honor to meet with His Grace Archbishop Francis Le to discuss Catholic Education.**



# OAPCE Parent Survey!

## Take a minute to fill out our survey!

We are excited to share with you our OAPCE Parent Survey! Your answers to this survey are important to ensure that the focus of OAPCE is aligned with your needs and to provide the Ministry of Education with data that they frequently request from us. To effectively preserve Catholic education and advocate for its continued support, we need to hear your feedback. Additionally, by demonstrating the power of our numbers, we can show the collective voice of parents in Catholic education.

Your participation in this survey will contribute to our ability to advocate on your behalf!

<https://forms.gle/nUqxpmaL6AWhfAg8>





# 85th Annual Conference 2024 at a Glance

**Friday April 12 and Saturday April 13, 2024 in TORONTO!**

**Our annual conference draws parents from across the province!  
The two day weekend starts with a meet 'n' greet on the Friday evening.  
The all day Conference on the Saturday with speakers, a Vendor Mall and a Mass Celebration, ending with a Gala Dinner and Awards.**

**His Grace, Archbishop Leo will be a keynote as well lead us in mass in this celebratory year. Minister of Education Stephen Lecce will also be in attendance as well as other dignitaries!**

**Stay tuned for more information to come!**



# OAPCE - Who are we what do we do!

## Our Mission

To Engage, Advocate, and Enhance through the strength of Our Collective Voice.

Through our connection to home, school and church, OAPCE collaborates with local and provincial education partners to strengthen the parent voice.

## Our Vision

OAPCE is the voice of parents that promotes and protects publicly funded Catholic Education in Ontario.



**WE ARE THE ONLY CATHOLIC PARENT ORGANIZATION REGULATED BY THE Ministry of Education IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**

**TO REPRESENT THE CATHOLIC PARENT VOICE in Education Act, REg. 612:**

Section 3(1)8 of Ontario Regulation 612/00 which regulates School Councils states when outlining the composition of school councils: *“One person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education or Parent Partenaires en Education, if the association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education or Parent Partenaires en Education is established.*

**OAPCE is the voice of parents that promotes and protects publicly funded Catholic Education in member Catholic School boards in the province of Ontario.**

## How do we do it: ENGAGE-ADVOCATE-ENHANCE!

- ⦿ **OAPCE is a vital connection between the Ministry of Education, Catholic district school boards in Ontario, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO), the Institute of Catholic Education (ICE) the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA), the Catholic Principals Council (CPCO), the Archdiocese, regional parent's associations, school councils, and other valuable parent groups as a prominent advocate for Catholic education excellence, parental rights and student success.**
- ⦿ **Provide support to publicly funded English Catholic education in Ontario by soliciting input, analyzing and communicating results and information on matters affecting it.**
- ⦿ **Provide education and training for parents regarding school council operations, increasing parental involvement, improving student performance, faith development for themselves and their children and other matters related to education and the Catholic faith.**

# How do we do it: ENGAGE-ADVOCATE-ENHANCE!



**Ensure the highest quality of education for each child according to their physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs by working with the Ministry of Education in forums, workshops, and/or working groups. Ensure that our faith is infused in all that is in Catholic schools.**

**Provide for the welfare of children and youth and the care and protection of children by working with our partners in Catholic education to ensure the Catholic faith is modeled and infused in the curriculum and learning environments.**

**This year we have taken on a much larger advocacy and engaging role in our obligation to uphold parental rights, parents as first educators and to ensure that our Faith is infused in all that we do in Catholic Education. We will be launching our new OAPCE Ambassador program for those parents interested in involving themselves more in OAPCE!**

# What do OAPCE Liaison representatives do?

**Voting Parent Member on School Parent Council.**

**Be a point of contact for information sharing between OAPCE and the School Parent Council.**

**An OAPCE liaison rep provides all information received from their Regional Director, and OAPCE provincial to their school community.**



**Participate in OAPCE meetings, events/conferences. Share all information with your community & provide feedback when requested.**

**Help with OAPCE Call to Action.**

# OAPCE Liaison Reps CALL TO ACTION!

## For All Newly Appointed OAPCE Liaison Representatives And Anyone Interested:

- Get 10 Parents to Sign up & Subscribe for OAPCE emails & information
- Get Parents to Share the OAPCE Parents4Parents Newsletter
- Attend Regional Committee Meetings OR Sign up & Attend Virtual Check'n'Connect Meetings with all parents across the province!
- Visit our new and fresh website [oapce.org](http://oapce.org)
- Fill in surveys and consultations shared from OAPCE Provincial and/or your Regional Directors.

Sign Up



**ENGAGE**  
**ADVOCATE**  
**ENHANCE**

