



By **Paul Lacalamita**, President-elect

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

AGM Address to Delegates

Last year in London, CPCO's 2009 conference committee from Dufferin-Peel distributed mirrors with the theme *Celebrating the Human Face of God* etched in the mirror. The explanation offered for choosing the mirror as the symbol for this conference was to give a clear image of the human face of God – you!

How appropriate a reminder it is that each of us holds a part of the truth and no one person holds all of it. I thought it a very significant symbol since it reminded me that a key area of strength of our organization is the diversity of communities and experiences found within the many Catholic school boards across our province. How comforting it is to know that the complex nature of our leadership responsibilities are courted through a professional organization that embraces and sustains our diversity while promoting and nourishing our binding beliefs in Catholic education.

This coming year will continue to provide CPCO with many opportunities and challenges.

- CPCO will continue to promote to our partners the tri-level model of effective decision-making and school leadership. This model nurtures the value and dignity of each partner and allows for the contribution of our gifts towards the success of Ontario's Catholic school students. The authentic implementation of this working relationship can only lead to the achievement of good faith bargaining of terms and conditions for all local principals' associations.
- This solidification of trust will give cause to promoting the value of what we do, to those interested in assuming principal positions in our boards. To assist with the development and promotion of these leaders, while keeping in tune with declining enrolment scenarios across Ontario, CPCO will continue to work with the Ministry of Education to recognize the flaws, vulnerabilities and inherent risks present in asking teachers to assume the role of principal without any assurance of returning to teaching with seniority, if they so choose. Ideally, principal job protection should be anchored in provincial legislation.
- The council of district representatives and standing committees are a vital component of CPCO's governance model. CPCO will continue to develop strategies that encourage members to share their concerns, knowledge and insight on a variety of issues. Through various means of communication, members will be informed as to how their feedback has impacted the decisions of the executive council. Building relationships and promoting good will is paramount for achieving our full potential as a professional organization.
- Decisions around governance will continue to be vetted through a sound understanding and insight into the executive council's fiscal responsibilities. Budget proposals will be made with a careful balance of providing for the needs of our members including such areas as faith, research and communication opportunities. Improvements to legal and other member services will continue to be a priority.
- By recognizing and promoting a reflective practice that focuses on what needs to be, as well as what needs to be done, our members will continue to be offered tools through our professional learning services to lead schools that will produce Catholic graduates ready to make a difference in our society and bring Ontario into the next generation.

These are political times, which beg the rudder of a professional association that can model the real essence of community by sustaining a network for learning; one that aspires to an interdependent partnership creating endless possibilities. Clearly, our defining moments will come during the year when we create opportunities to support one another, fuelling hope and contributing to an effective organization that empowers people to represent an informed perspective of Catholic school leadership, both provincially and abroad. Recognizing and embracing the dynamic tension that is created when the challenges to publicly-funded Catholic schools in this province are juxtaposed to the successes and displays of our schools' merits and accomplishments will be paramount in carving CPCO's pathway of political action. We must strive to create a synergy that evolves from traditions and practices of yesteryear to decisions and actions that respond to today's challenges of public education and the needs of Catholic principals and vice-principals in our schools and boards. I look forward to beginning this work together with your executive this summer.

I stand before you today, very proud and honoured to be your next president. I look forward to meeting and working with all CPCO members in the year to come. As Dan and Joan did most recently and as our past-presidents, Don, Paul, Patrick, Terri, Nelly, Brent, Arlene, Mary-Catherine, Marny and Jim did before, I pledge to be your servant-leader representing your collective

integrity. I look forward to working with our new deputy director, Clara Pitoscia as well as the dedicated staff in the CPCO office. Dan and Joan, your work this year has exemplified dedication and perseverance. Since Lou's retirement in October, you have steered this organization with vitality, offering our members stability and uninterrupted service. For this, you are to be especially commended.

Thank you to my friends and colleagues from Waterloo for their support and to my board for their support in allowing me this opportunity to serve the members of CPCO as president next year.

Thank you to my family – my children David and Andrea, and Jane, my wife of 27 years – for supporting me in this new position of responsibility knowing the personal sacrifice that this job will entail during the next year.

As another AGM ends, I cannot help but marvel at the incredible assembly of talent and faith that you the delegates, the people you represent and the participants in this room, bring to the name and reputation of Catholic education in this province. All Catholic shareholders across this province should be very proud of the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario, its credibility and the opportunities that your professional association brings to the Catholic school communities we serve.

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