



Celebrating
the Human Face
of God

CPCO Conference 2009

By **Nelly Kelders**, Member Services Director

The annual CPCO conference is an opportunity for members from across the province to gather to celebrate the wonder of Catholic education through prayer, learning and fellowship. This year's conference was no exception. Participants were greeted with not only the smiling faces of the committee members and staff at the registration tables but also with a sea of photos reflecting the face of God in the children we greet in our schools every day. The mirrors strategically placed throughout the displays also helped to remind us that we too are reflections of the human face of God.

The conference opened on Thursday, April 30, 2009 with the Liturgy of the Word. It set the stage for the conference theme, reminding us yet again that we can see the face of God in the people we meet daily in our lives. The Holy Name of Mary choir, conducted by Tara Nadal led the assembly in song. Their closing hymn was another opportunity to reflect on how we live the beatitudes in our lives. Stephen Lewis, chair of the Stephen Lewis Foundation, in his keynote address extended the message of the opening liturgy by talking about the eight Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations. His examples came from the experiences he has had working with the people of Africa.

St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School choir under the direction of Jamie Marr set the tone for Friday's agenda. Their uplifting voices invited those assembled to open their hearts to the message of God, to allow Him deep within their hearts. Keynote speaker Steve Paikin, host of TVO's *The Agenda*, commented on how the music in the liturgy was so inspirational to begin the morning. He talked about the history of public education in Ontario since equal funding for Catholic schools was introduced and the implications today as Ontario's population continues to diversify.

Two sessions of workshops were available to conference attendees, offering a variety of topics. They included: how boys and girls learn differently; the challenges of English language learners; inclusion; aboriginal awareness; safe schools; and dealing with conflict and social justice. When not attending sessions, participants had an opportunity to visit the vendors' displays offering a variety of services, resources and promotional materials for schools.

As the conference began with prayer, it ended with the celebration of the Eucharist. The Most Reverend Peter Hundt, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Toronto concelebrated the mass with Most Reverend Paul-André Durocher, Bishop of the Diocese of Alexandria-Cornwall and Father Jim Roth, chaplain of the



Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. Music was provided by the talented choirs of Bishop Scalabrini and St. Isaac Jogues schools. At the end of mass the conference's charity, Share Life was presented with a cheque for more than \$2,000, collected from the sale of vendor passports to the conference participants. Bishop Hundt blessed several hundred crosses created by the L'Arche community. These were distributed at the end of mass as a reminder to inspire us to act with generosity, justice and wisdom.

The Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario would like to thank the members of the Dufferin-Peel conference committee for their enthusiasm, dedication and tireless work to ensure that the *Celebrating the Human Face of God* conference would be a meaningful experience for their colleagues in CPCO.



Conference committee with Director of Education, John Kostoff

Conference Co-chairs: Silvana Gos, Sarah Russell

Liturgy Committee: Sharon Goodland, Sara Caruso-Taccone, Alexis Galvao, Paul Gastaldin, Cathy Greco, Colleen Klein, Lorrie Moffat, Jeff Quenneville, Gwen Scanlon, John Sicol

Program Committee: Deborah Downey, Carol Bacc, Peter Cusumano, Lori DeWitte, Marilyn Hayhow, Carrie Howard, Pat Kelly-Zucchiatti, Brenda LeClair, Ed McMahon, Maria Morizio, Paula Prajza, Brian Stapleton, Julie Tollis

Hospitality Committee: Nancy Levey, Olivia Farone, Fran Anderson, Sandra Antonutti, Michelina Battaglini, Marg Bonk, Steeve Boulanger, Tanya Buchanan, Clare Devlin, Lou Dodaro, Peter Duncan, Joanne Golla, Emily Moran, Andrea Milanetti, Twinkie Patricio-Fernando, RoseMarie Pazzelli, Lynn Patterson, Ursula Pellecchia, Jennifer Testa, AnneMarie Slak, Sue Steer

Secretary and Treasurer: Kathy McQuire