



# Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy

2483 Bleams Road, New Hamburg, ON N3A 3J2

September 6th 2017

## Education is an Art

Dear Parents,

Every year when we see you send your children back to our school in September, we feel a certain trepidation - not because we fear that the children might be more for us than we can handle, but because of the weight of responsibility. Your children's adult life and eternal salvation will depend on the education that they receive and we will play a large role in their education. We, with you, will be responsible. You, in the first place, we in the second place.

It came home to us last June just how vital it is to have truly Catholic schools when all of the public schools in Waterloo region were required to fly the "Pride" flag. Truly, we

have no option but to have real Catholic schools that teach truth and the love of it.

Fr. Couture, our District Superior, suggested to me that it would be very beneficial for me to write to our parents regularly - not so much to keep them in touch with practical developments as to talk to them about education. Wherever two people are working towards the same goal, they must coordinate, they must sing off the same hymn sheet. By and large, we do. There will always be a legitimate diversity of emphasis based on the character and temperament of the educator. This is good as long as it is in accidental and not in essential things.

Education is an Art. The definition of an art is “Knowledge joined to skill in making things.” Somebody can theoretically know a lot about music but he is only a musician if he actually has skill. Similarly, if he has native skill but never practices, he will never be a great artist.

Most parents are very good and completely devoted to their children’s education; but not a few parents (and sometimes teachers) lack knowledge and some skill. They may be ignorant and thus make mistakes which have a bad effect. I recall as an example a parent some years ago to whom I suggested that he shouldn’t allow his fourteen year-old daughter to wear a short

skirt to Mass. He agreed and replied: "I know Father, but I'm afraid that if I push her on this, she may stop going to Mass altogether." A good man - making two mistakes: 1) if I allow my children to commit lesser sins, I can negotiate with them not to commit greater ones, and 2) if my adolescent daughter chooses to defy me, there is nothing that I can do about it.

Another example. Every year, at least one good family contacts our school to enquire about sending their thirteen or fourteen year-old son to our school as a boarder; they fill out the forms and are overjoyed that they have found a truly Catholic school. He is accepted. Then, nothing. We contact them: is he coming? "We'd love him to come, Father, we think he can, but he doesn't want to." Mistake. It is true that not every boy or girl can go to boarding school - there is a certain psychological balance that they need. But that is the parents' judgement and decision, not the teenager's. Another mistake I've seen is parents who give their twelve or thirteen year-old child a smartphone and then wonder why the child grows distant; or who give their fourteen or fifteen year-old son a Wifi key and then wonder why he's not frequenting the sacraments quite so much. These are good parents who are making mistakes.

The purpose of these letters then will be to go through questions of educational and practical consequence so that we

can have a common strategy to achieve the best for our young people. Our guides will be common sense, the supernatural teachings of Christ, St. John Bosco, the Patron of Educators, and sound educationalists. Feel free to give me any questions that may come to mind or experiences that will help me.

Fr. David Sherry

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## NEWS OF THE BUILDING PROJECT

As you know, we received approval for our project on June 30th. While I was in Ireland this Summer, the construction team hit the ground running and have been proceeding very quickly. You can keep up to date on progress at our building blog: [olmca.blogspot.com](http://olmca.blogspot.com)

Also, can I ask you a favour? After our initial fundraising which raised a significant amount to cover all planning and the first stage of building (construction of the entire shell), we need to fundraise again for the second stage (interior finishing and furnishing). To this end, we have set up a “crowdfunding”

website. Can I ask you to send this to your friends and family, acquaintances and fellow parishioners and ask them to donate to our project? If 1,000 people donate \$500, we will reach our target of \$500,000. Similarly, if 2,000 people donate \$250.

The address is: [www.gofundme.com/olmca-buildingproject](http://www.gofundme.com/olmca-buildingproject)

Thank you and please keep praying for the project.