



CARFLEO⁺

CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION OF RELIGIOUS & FAMILY LIFE EDUCATORS OF ONTARIO

2026 Autumn Newsletter



*“Rejoice always, pray
without ceasing, give thanks
in all circumstances; for this
is the will of God in Christ
Jesus for you”*

~ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

IN THIS ISSUE

October Invitations...1
Message from the Chair...2
Reflection from Bishop
Lobsinger ...3
Monthly Intentions from Pope
Leo...3
WFMP 2026...4
Important Dates...4
Catholic Education Theme 2026-
27...4
10 Action Items in Magnifica
Humanitas....5-7
St. Francis 8
Faith in Action in Ontario...9
About CARFLEO...10

OCTOBER INVITATIONS: GRATITUDE, HOPE, & COMPASSION

October invites us to pause, notice the beauty around us, and give thanks for the gifts that sustain our Catholic school communities. Amid busy classrooms, changing leaves, and daily responsibilities, God meets us in ordinary moments: a welcoming smile, a patient explanation, a courageous question, an unexpected act of kindness.

This month and beyond, may gratitude become more than a feeling. May it become a way of seeing and serving. When we recognize each student as a beloved child of God, listen deeply to one another, and make room for those who feel unseen, we bring the Gospel to life.

Across Ontario's Catholic schools, hope grows through these small, faithful choices. We do not need to have every answer to make a difference. We need hearts willing to love.

As we journey through October, may we give thanks generously, teach compassionately, and trust that God is working through us, one encounter at a time.



Rosary Month

October is officially dedicated as the Month of the Holy Rosary, a time set aside to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary and meditate on the life of Jesus Christ.

Message from the Chair of CARFLEO, Mike Gundert

Peace be with you, members of CARFLEO! I hope that this message finds all of you well as you embrace the blessings of this fall season and as we are well into the 2026-27 school year. It is a blessing and a privilege to begin my second term as the Chair of CARFLEO for the next two years.

This year, the Catholic Education Week theme is Artisans of Peace, inspired by many of Pope Leo's recent messages. An artisan is defined as a craftsperson. As artisans, we are challenged to reflect upon how we're going to shape peace in our communities, in our families, in our personal lives, and in our hearts. Then, most importantly, we're called to bring peace to these places.

CARFLEO is planning for another exciting year, and looks forward to the following events and opportunities:

- October 22-23 When Faith Meets Pedagogy (vendor table)
- December (TBD) CARFLEO Virtual Advent Retreat
- December 15 ICE/CARFLEO Annual Reunion with RFLE Consultants (virtual)
- January 5 CARFLEO Award Nominations Open
- March 30-31 CARFLEO Conference (Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre)

Chief Executive Officers received correspondence earlier this month that included a message from myself along with the annual board membership fee invoice and the CARFLEO board contact update form. Thank you to all member boards for your prompt attention to paying your membership invoice. The funds from these fees continue to support the excellent opportunities that CARFLEO is able to provide, such as the Advent retreat and annual conference.

We look forward to meeting you at the When Faith Meets Pedagogy conference in Toronto! Please come and introduce yourself at the CARFLEO table in the vendor hall. We will have some swag bags to give away along with faith-inspired stickers and other special gifts for you, in appreciation for your visit!

On behalf of the CARFLEO executive, I would like to wish you a blessed year ahead and I express my thanks for your ongoing support of CARFLEO! May the peace of Christ be with you today and in the year ahead, and may it especially find you in those times which you need it the most.

Mike Gundert
Chair

A Time for Reflection

Most Rev. W. L. Lobsinger

My Dear Religious and Family Life Teachers,

What is your ultimate purpose? Why do Religion and Family Life Teachers exist? Is not your ultimate purpose to help the young people entrusted to you to encounter and develop a relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church? In a world filled with competing voices, changing values, and questions about identity, meaning, and purpose, you have the amazing opportunity to help young people encounter the person of Jesus Christ and discover the beauty of living according to the Gospel.

Catholic education is about much more than the transmission of knowledge. It is about forming hearts and minds, nurturing consciences, and helping students recognize that their lives have dignity, meaning, and a divine purpose. Religious education invites students to know and love Jesus Christ, to become familiar with Sacred Scripture, to appreciate the richness of our Catholic tradition, and to participate more fully in the life of the Church. Family life education complements this mission by helping students understand the dignity of every human person, the meaning of authentic love, the importance of healthy relationships, and the responsibilities that accompany human freedom. Together, these two gifts offer an integrated vision of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God and called to holiness.

As religious and family life teachers, you are partners with parents, who are the first educators of their children, and collaborators in the Church's mission of evangelization. Your work strengthens families, supports our Catholic schools, and helps build communities in which the dignity of each person is respected and celebrated.

On behalf of the Bishops of Ontario, I thank you for your dedication, your generosity, and your willingness to accompany young people on their journey of faith and human development. May the Holy Spirit renew your enthusiasm, deepen your own relationship with Jesus, and give you wisdom in your daily work.

God bless,

Bishop Lobsinger

Monthly Intentions of Pope Leo



September: For the care of water.

Let us pray that there be a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.



October: For mental health ministry.

Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.



November: For the proper use of wealth.

Let us pray for the proper use of wealth, that not succumbing to the temptation of selfishness, it may always be put at the service of the common good and solidarity of those who have less.

When Faith Meets Pedagogy
Being the Beatitudes:
Forming Hearts, Shaping Minds, Inspiring Faith
Delta Airport Hotel, Toronto, Ontario
October 22-24, 2026

Blessed are the poor in heart, for they shall see God. (Matt 5:8)

Upcoming Events

CARFLEO Advent Retreat 2026

December 2026

CARFLEO Award Nominations Open

January 5, 2027

CARFLEO Conference 2027

March 30 - 31, 2027

Catholic Education Week 2026-27

May 2 - 7, 2027



Catholic Education Theme 2026 - 27

Resources: <https://www.ocsta.on.ca/project/cet-2026-2027-becoming-artisans-of-peace/>



"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they
will be called children of God."
(Matthew 5:9)

The five sub themes for Catholic Education Week: Becoming Artisans of Peace are...

Peace from God
Peace within
Peace with others
Peace in our communities
Peace in the world

Magnifica Humanitas: Humanity in its Grandeur

Encyclical Letter of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV:

On safeguarding the human person in the time of Artificial Intelligence

May 15, 2026

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/encyclicals/documents/20260515-magnifica-humanitas.html>

10 Action Items supported by excerpts from the Encyclical:

Check First

132. The use of digital platforms and AI systems is driving profound changes in public and political communication. Tools that could foster dialogue and participation are often used to construct distorted narratives and blur the boundaries between truth and falsehood, mixing facts with opinions. [...] In public discourse, the truth of facts has a rational dimension, as it requires verification, cross-checking of sources and responsible argumentation. Moreover, it is deeply relational, built through bonds of trust and shared practices, as well as an honest exchange with others and with the world.

Cultivate Silence and Slow Reading

146. ... As knowledge becomes increasingly fragmented, it becomes difficult to grasp reality as a whole, to ask profound questions about meaning, or to develop authentic, critical and creative thought. Many educators already report signs of dehumanization, where people may “know many things” but struggle to find direction in their lives, partly due to an inability to connect information with deeper knowledge or maintain a sense of purpose. A genuinely healthy attitude is needed, requiring rhythms that incorporate silence, in-depth study, reading and judicious analysis, for without these elements inner freedom may be compromised.

Disarm your words

214. The first contribution we can make toward a more humane civilization is to be mindful of our words. “Let us disarm words and we will help to disarm the world.” [188] Words have enormous power, something we experience in our daily interactions; for example, spoken words can change our mood for better or for worse. “Peace begins with each one of us: in the way we look at others, listen to others and speak about others [...] We have a real opportunity to contribute to the common good each time we speak the truth, offer wise advice, support those in need of comfort, denounce injustice and give a voice to the voiceless.

10 Action Items (continued from p. 5)

Supervise your children

141. In recent years, psychological and psychiatric literature has documented with growing insistence how early and unsupervised exposure to digital devices and social media can negatively impact sleep, attention span, control of emotions and relationships, especially during the most vulnerable stages of life, at times with tragic consequences [...] Having a personal mobile device at too early an age and using it without adult supervision can exacerbate young people's vulnerabilities, foster addiction and expose them to isolation, bullying and cyberbullying, as well as to pressures to share intimate images or sensitive information.

Teach your children to think

140. Education, by contrast, is a long journey requiring patience, and therefore needs time for development and for engagement with reality beyond appearances. This is a fundamental issue because every technology shapes those who use it. Educating people about the use of AI, then, involves teaching them to decide when and for what purpose it ought not to be used. The speed and ease with which answers or summaries can be obtained risk extinguishing the desire to ask questions, which is a process that bears fruit only over time.

Follow the Supply Chain

179. New forms of slavery are fueled by economic chains and digital infrastructures. Therefore, action is required on several fronts. First, the supply chains that underpin the technological industry and the digital economy need to become more transparent, so that no competitive advantage is built upon hidden exploitation. Second, companies and investors need to adopt clear criteria for preventive ethical verification (due diligence), placing among their priorities the protection of workers, the fight against forced labor and the assessment of the social impact of data-driven business models. Prioritize

Be Present

239. Let us cultivate relationships! In an era that favors speed and fragmentation, the human person still yearns to receive care and recognition from attentive minds, kind words and hands capable of tenderness. The digital culture multiplies connections and offers new opportunities for interaction; yet, the human heart retains an irrevocable need for genuine closeness. I invite everyone to cherish places and times where physical presence remains crucial, such as shared meals, Christian community gatherings, time spent with the lonely and serving the poor.

10 Action Items (continued from p. 6)

Pray for Peace

228. ... Indeed, for each of us, peace primarily comes “from God, God who loves us all, unconditionally.” [203] It is a gift given by Jesus to his disciples on the day of Easter: “Peace be with you! It is the peace of the risen Christ. A peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering.” [204] With these words, I greeted the Church and the world on the day of my election to the See of Peter. I wish to repeat them now, and to invite everyone to pray for this gift. Let us never tire of praying for peace and of committing ourselves to achieving it in our relationships and in society.

Demand AI Regulation

106. Calling for prudence, rigorous evaluation and even, at times, a slower pace in adopting AI does not mean opposing progress; instead, it is an exercise of responsible care for the human family. This need is all the more urgent given the frequent imbalance between the speed of technological growth and the slower development of awareness, norms, safeguards and institutions capable of governing its effects. It is not enough to invoke ethics in the abstract; robust legal frameworks, independent oversight, informed users and a political system that does not abdicate its responsibility are required.

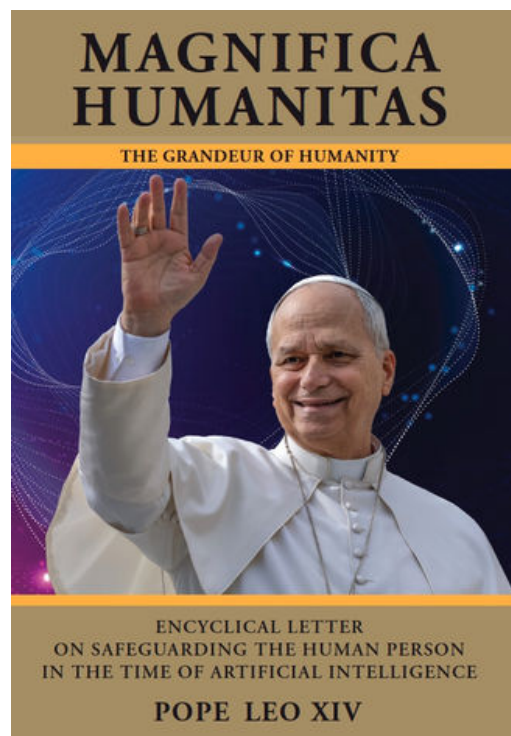
Refuse the Normalization of War

192. Today, more than ever, without prejudice to the right to self-defense in the strictest sense, it is important to reaffirm that the “just war” theory, which has all too often been used to justify any kind of war, is now outdated. [182] Humanity possesses far more effective and capable tools for promoting human life and resolving conflicts, such as dialogue, diplomacy and forgiveness. The use of force, violence and weapons reflects a relational poverty that always has disastrous consequences for civilian populations.

Based on the video:

**10 Things Pope Leo XIV
Is Asking You To Do —
From His New Encyclical**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPFN2Zwl4Ms>



Saint Francis Special Jubilee Year

October 4 is the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, whose death 800 years ago in 1226 is being honoured through a special Jubilee Year proclaimed by Pope Leo XIV from January 10, 2026, to January 10, 2027.

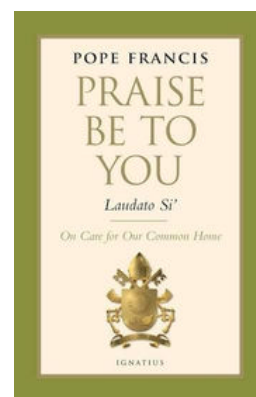
One of St. Francis' most treasured prayers, the "Canticle of the Creatures," shows his profound love of all creatures and all of creation. He was also deeply compassionate toward the poor and worked tirelessly for peace. These themes come together beautifully in this prayer of praise to God.

Composed around 1224–1225. Canticles would ordinarily have been written in Latin. Francis, however, wrote this one in Umbrian, the local Italian dialect, so that all in his community could listen to it, sing it, and connect with its message of praise.

Pope Francis was so deeply inspired by St. Francis and took the title of his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, from the canticle's line, "Praised be You."

Canticle of the Creatures

Praised be You, my Lord, with all Your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,
who is the day and through whom You give us light.
And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour;
and bears a likeness of You, Most High One.



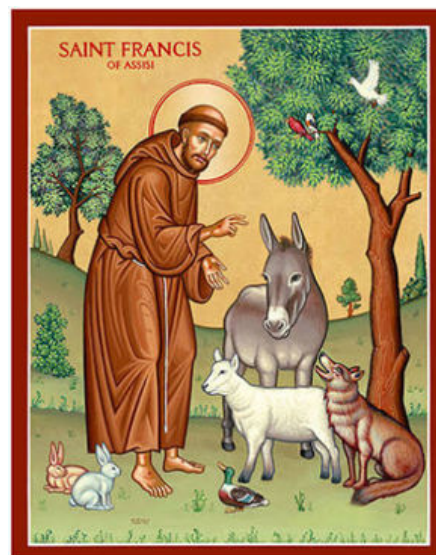
Praised be You, my Lord, for Sister Moon and the stars;
in heaven You have formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be You, my Lord, for Brother Wind,
and for the air and cloudy and clear and every weather,
through which You give sustenance to Your creatures.

Praised be You, my Lord, for Sister Water,
which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

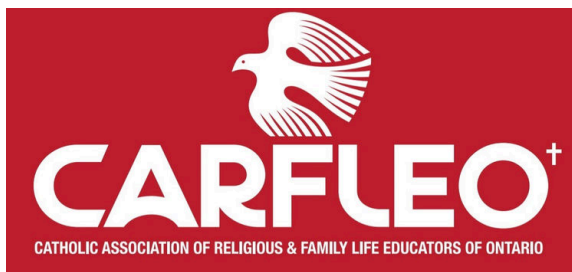
Praised be You, my Lord, for Brother Fire,
through whom You light the night;
and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Praised be You, my Lord, for our Sister Mother Earth,
who sustains and governs us,
and who produces varied fruits with coloured flowers and herbs



Faith in Action in Catholic Education Across the Province





Our Mission and Vision

CARFLEO, the Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario, is an organization dedicated to supporting Elementary and Secondary Catholic educators through their boards' Religious and Family Life Education office in their

ongoing learning and engagement in the subject areas of Religious Education and Family Life. Working closely with the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO), CARFLEO commits to being partners in education with the many organizations within the province that support the ongoing growth and development of theological thought, religious education and family life. CARFLEO works to engage educators in Religious and Family Life Education priorities in the province and the world at large. CARFLEO.com offers its members many resources to assist them in their role as Catholic educators. CARFLEO also offers in-person opportunities for educators to learn from one another and to share the Good News across the province. Our vision for CARFLEO is for the members to continue to renew their promise and commitment to the promotion and growth of Catholic Education in the Province of Ontario and beyond.

CARFLEO Executive 2026-27

Keri Calvesbert, Brant Haldimand Norfolk CDSB

Rick Frias, Windsor-Essex CDSB

Mike Gundert, Algonquin & Lakeshore CDSB (Chair)

Jennifer Koch, PVNC CDSB (Newsletter)

Most Rev. Wayne Lobsinger, Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton

Lisa Malcom, Toronto CDSB (Secretary)

John Murphy, Waterloo CDSB

Stephanie Parniak, Huron-Superior CDSB

Caroline Thuss, Huron-Perth CDSB (Treasurer)

Kate Veinotte, CDSB of Eastern Ontario (Newsletter)

Amanda Wagg-Boyer, Niagara CDSB

Julie Webster, Dufferin-Peel CDSB

CONNECT WITH US

[CARFLEO.com](https://www.carfleo.com)



Have something you'd like to share for an upcoming CARFLEO newsletter?

Deadline for submissions is 2 weeks prior to publication dates.

Send to: Jennifer Koch at jeatonkoch@pvncdsb.on.ca

or Kate Veinotte at kate.veinotte@cdsbeo.on.ca

Upcoming newsletters: Winter - January 15, Conference - March 15, Spring - May 15