



BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK
Catholic District School Board

Catholic Education Centre | 322 Fairview Drive P.O. Box 217 | Brantford, ON N3T 5M8
T 519.756.6369 | E directorsoffice@bhncdsb.ca | W bhncdsb.ca

Carol Luciani – Chair of the Board | Mike McDonald - Director of Education & Secretary

April 21, 2025

Statement from the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board on the Passing of His Holiness, Pope Francis

It is with heartfelt sadness that the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCD SB) mourns the death of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, who passed away early this Easter Monday, April 21, 2025, in Rome.

Pope Francis was an exemplary model of the thoughtful and faith-filled servant leadership that Christ calls for in the Gospels. The Holy Father led with humility as the shepherd of approximately 1.4 billion Catholics, prioritizing peace, inclusivity and reconciliation during his 12 years as pontiff. He was a champion for the poor and marginalized, envisioning a world where empathy and compassion would be the primary drivers of change. His declaration that 2025 would be a Jubilee year calling Catholics to be *Pilgrims of Hope* committed the faithful to prayerfully journeying towards a world filled with promise *for all*.

The Holy Father's four encyclicals *Lumen Fidei* (2013), a testament to the beauty of our faith, *Laudato Si'* (2015), on environmental stewardship, *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), highlighting the importance of maintaining positive relationships with one another, and *Dilexit Nos* (2024), about trusting in God's love and infinite mercy, spoke about practical contemporary issues impacting our faith within an ever-changing world. Pope Francis' call for a Synod on Synodality uniquely provided a venue for clergy, religious and laity to discern how their voices in unison could be a vehicle to hold future conversations about contemporary topics affecting the Church.

As we eagerly anticipate the opening of the BHNCD SB's newest school, *Pope Francis Catholic Elementary* in Caledonia (expected September 2025), we are comforted that our school board will forever remember the legacy left by the Holy Father.

All flags at BHNCD SB schools and buildings will be flown at half-mast as a sign of mourning for our beloved Pope Francis. Schools and board facilities will continue normal operations on Tuesday, April 22 providing students and staff with a venue to celebrate the life of the Holy Father and pray for the repose of his soul.

Recognizing that many of our students have never experienced *sede vacante*, the transition time between the death of a pope and the papal conclave that follows, the BHNCD SB is committed to supporting staff and students through this journey over the coming days and weeks.



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On the day Pope Francis was elected supreme pontiff of the Catholic Church, he humbly asked the faithful to pray for him as he assumed this great responsibility of service. We now pray alongside Catholics world-wide for our Holy Father:

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord,

and let perpetual light shine upon him.

May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed,

through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

In partnership and hope,

Carol Luciani – Chair of the Board, Mike McDonald - Director of Education