

**Reverend Father, Sisters, Distinguished Guests, HC Staff and Faculty, Graduates, Parents and friends of the Class of 2010**

It is my honor to welcome you to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Commencement of Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School. I am sure there are many of you in attendance who can recall your graduation a number of years ago. Graduation Day then, as it is, now remains a time for congratulations, best wishes, and thanksgiving for what has been and hope for what is yet to come. As we celebrate all that is possible today, we are pleased to share this moment with all of you.

Although hair styles, clothes, the music and yes, dancing trends are much different today then years ago this night and the graduate are very similar. This is a day of saying good bye and embracing the next phase of your life and education.

Our graduates, have done a lot of thinking to arrive here today. Every one of you here today have completed the graduation requirements as established by the Ministry of Education and our local Catholic District School Board ; in fact, 91 of you earned the Ontario Scholar designation for possessing an average of 80 % or greater. Some of you are well on your way to completing the requirements for an apprenticeship in the trade of your choice. You have been accepted by an impressive list of colleges and universities and you all should be proud of your achievements, I am very proud of you.

What will you remember of 2010? Mr. Bouvier will remember the Chicago Blackhawks winning their first Stanley Cup since 1961, bumping the Toronto Maple Leafs as one of the NHL team with the longest championship drought, 43 years and counting, and counting. Earlier this year the "Do You Believe" commercials sparked excitement in all corners of our great country and when Sydney Crosby scored the golden goal in over time to give Canada a 3-2 victory and a record setting 14<sup>th</sup> gold medal we all became proud believers. Tonight we all believe in you, your accomplishment and your future. I hope you believe in yourself.

In 2006, we started school on the Tuesday after Labour Day, and this class assembled in the cafeteria. For many, although they are less likely to admit today, it was a scary and exciting time. Here are some actual quotes from our graduates: "Wowser."; "Sweetness." "Big, nice and clean school." "Wow, everyone looks the same!"; and the ever

practical "How am I gonna open my locker?" In so many ways, that day seems like yesterday and yet it also seems so long ago. There was so much hope... so much nervousness...so much promise that today like that day almost four years ago the question remains "**What do I do now?**", another actual quote from one of tonight's graduates. A question that will repeat itself numerous times over the course of your life, "**What do I do now?**" **How to answer that question is a challenge.**

From our Improv team to the award-winning and professional yearbook (The Crusade), video competitions, you have developed talents that few of us imagined. Your achievements in the arts, are surpassed by none, your performances and recognition will attest to that. You've thought, wondered and dreamed in creative ways. In this year's memorable school musical, *West Side Story*, Tony sings to Maria that

Some day a time for us  
Time together  
With time to spare  
Time to look  
Time to care  
Someday  
Somewhere

Some of us here today, maybe your parents your teachers, are wondering where your Someday Somewhere is going to be, how your lives are going to end up, how are you going to deal with the challenges of life . It is OK to wonder but, I also think it is important to realize that your future is not just something that is going to happen to you. It is up to you to create it, **What do I do now? look to your self, look to your family**

In your time at Holy Cross you've done much. Each graduate has completed 40 hours of service to our communities. The majority of you have contributed far more. You recognize the importance of giving; giving time, giving money, giving food, giving hope. In community service, half the graduating class recorded 60 or more hours, and 126 members of this class provided over 100 hours of commitment with one student volunteering over 1 200 hours. **What do I do now?** look to be of service to one another, to your community

Many of our students have learned that through **working with a team**, anything's possible. The vast majority of you are involved in an extracurricular activity here at school. You put in countless hours at practice, which certainly

pays off in victories and post season play. There really aren't many vacancies in our rich 25-year history of Holy Cross athletics. Almost every team has won either a KASSAA or regional championship at some point, some provincial titles. In this, the year leading up to our school's silver anniversary, our Senior football team claimed the first of what I believe will be many claimed KASSAA titles.

You have worked late to finish a video, stayed after school for extra help, put down the remote control because you have a test to study for. You made the commitment to believe that with hard work, anything's possible. But, in your four years here, you weren't alone. Your families, teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, coaches, educational assistants, cafeteria ladies, secretaries, and custodians all believed in you as you learned that anything's possible. **What do I do now?** Remember you are not alone

At Holy Cross we select a pastoral theme for each year, what are they, don't worry I am not going to ask you, not even Mr. Forster or Fr. LaBelle to repeat them. **Grade 9; We are called to Proclaim Christ; Grade 10; Feed My People: Mind. Body and Spirit; Grade 11; God Asks Us to Care for his Creation and Grade 12 Christ; The Light of Our world.** I have seen you, by your actions, by what you say and do respond on a daily basis to these calls. You have pursued social justice initiatives, service learning trips, petition for justice and human rights, most recently the Save Our Prison Farms campaign and raise awareness and funds in support of ensuring respect for the human dignity of others. **What do I do now,** look to God and to prayer to your Church for an answer.

As your principal, I hope that as your journey continues, I hope you believe in yourself. As you make your way through life, always think of Holy Cross as home...remember...you'll always be safe at home! Tonight as you leave with a diploma in hand, remember to thank the people who have helped you make this day possible.

May God continue to bless you, your family and Holy Cross.

Paul A. Walsh

Holy Cross Principal

29<sup>th</sup> June 2010