



To the Northeastern Catholic District School Board: staff, teachers, students, and parents

COVID-19 and Easter

The world has been fighting COVID-19 for several months: people are sick, people are dying; our daily life is changed, our usual activities have become impossible, we live confined in our homes, financial precariousness awaits many, fear settles in our hearts. We look like the disciples of Emmaus, who *stopped, saddened* (Lk 24:17).

Even if our eyes are "*prevented from recognizing him*" (Lk 24:16), Jesus is with us: he draws near to us, he walks with us (24, 15). As he asked these disciples what they were discussing, so he invites us to tell him our sufferings, our worries, our fears. He listens to us and offers us his light and the strength of his presence. He can even warm our hearts, make them *burn* (v.32) with love, until we can return to the sacramental encounter of the Eucharist.

In this time of confinement, let us be more attentive to each other and perform little daily services with joy; let us give thanks for the technology that keeps us in contact with our relatives and friends and for the examples of generosity and dedication we witness here and all over the world; let us take time to open ourselves more to God in prayer, in reading his Word, in reflecting on the fragility of our human condition, called to eternal life, through the dead and risen Christ.

Let us pray for the sick, for the deceased and their families; for medical personnel and vaccine researchers; for those who courageously continue to serve; for the pastors of the Church and those who govern, that they will make the best decisions for the good of the people entrusted to them.

May the Risen Jesus be close to us, bring us the light of hope, keep our hearts burning with love for him and for all our brothers and sisters in humanity.

With my blessing.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads '+ Serge Poitras'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

✠ Serge Poitras
Bishop of Timmins

Holy Thursday, April 9, 2020