

Spring 2014

## Home and Away

Patrick Fitzpatrick

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# A night for remembering

Pat Fitzpatrick CSSp

Pat Fitzpatrick CSSp received an Award of Merit from the Toronto Catholic District School Board. With Fr Pat are William Lawrence, Student Trustee; Jo-Ann Davis, Chair of the Board; Angela Gauthier, Director of Education.

They call me “Father” — at my age I think it should be “Grandfather.”

My thoughts go back 35 years to 1979. The other Fr Fitz (FitzGerald) told me that the Board intended to start a Catholic Teachers Centre and suggested I might like to work there. I wrote to Sister Melanie McCann, explaining I had a year’s leave of absence, but if the position was still available in 1980 I would be very interested.

I went on my sabbatical — three months of which I spent in Jerusalem. On the day before I was due to leave there, I got a phone call from Fr Fitz: I’d got the Catholic Teachers Centre job starting in September.

We came together — Kitty McGilly, Sr Norma McCoy, and myself. Mary Malone joined us a year later. “Blessed was I among women.” Remember — I had come from Neil McNeil: an all-boys school and at that time an almost all-male staff.

We spent our first year in St Helen’s — our office was in the old school. Then we moved in here — one floor up, a wonderful meeting room, a somewhat small four-desk office.

Six years later Joan Daly Martin and Ralph Peter came on board.

I still have many folders and files from one-day and weekend retreats for elementary and occasionally high school staffs — for families of schools — region groups — retreat groups in Niagara Falls — PD days. I felt at home in Adult Religious Education.

This is Catholic Education Week across Ontario. We’re here — and we’re here to stay. Let us give thanks for our blessings and hold on to them.

If I am permitted to get personal tonight I would pass on the following:



Let us think “We” and not “I”.

“God is in the bits and pieces of Everyday —  
A kiss here and a laugh again, and sometimes tears”

— *Irish poet, Patrick Kavanagh*

“Becoming human beings is the main purpose of the  
whole process of education”

— *Saint John Paul II*

“See everything. Overlook a lot. Correct a little.”

— *Saint John XXIII*

“We go to people to be with them, live with them,  
walk beside them, listen to them and share our faith  
with them.”

— *Spiritan Rule of Life*

“Learn to pray your life”

— *Francis Libermann, co-founder of the Spiritans*

And last but certainly not least:

“The human and the holy go hand in hand.”