

School News from the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario

School: St. John Catholic Elementary, Perth

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St. John Catholic Elementary School Hosts Ark of the New Covenant

Perth, ON – St. John Catholic Elementary School is the only school in the Kingston Archdiocese to have hosted the Ark of the New Covenant as it journeys toward the 49th International Eucharistic Congress to be held this summer in Quebec City.

The Ark is being taken on a 64 day, 1000 kilometre pilgrimage on foot from Midland, Ontario to Quebec City by a group of 12 portageurs from across the country. St. John Catholic Elementary School and St. John Parish in Perth were included as stops on this journey.

A group of young adults came up with the idea for the Ark in May 2005. They were seeking a symbol that they could relate to, reminiscent of the World Youth Day Cross which traveled through many communities as it made its way to Toronto for World Youth Day.

These young people wanted a similar symbol, and the basis for the Ark was developed. They proposed the idea to the Eucharistic Congress organizing committee who embraced the idea, and suggested that angels be added to the front and back of the design in adoration and suggested the name “The Ark of the New Covenant” for the piece.

Carpenter and sculptor Alain Rioux began work on the Ark in the winter of 2006 and says it is the crowning achievement of his ten years as a professional artist.

Shortly after it was completed, the Ark made its first trip – to the Vatican. Pope Benedict XVI blessed the Ark on May 11, 2006 in the presence of the Quebec Bishops.

Over the past couple of years, The Ark has traveled to various Archdioceses and Dioceses. Prayers have been written by people from all walks of life and placed within the Ark to be brought to the Eucharistic Congress. Among those contributing to these intentions are students at CDSBEO schools St. Michael CHS in Kemptville and St. Thomas Aquinas CHS in Russell whom each hosted the Ark in the past.

“It is wonderful to have such a symbolic vessel in our school,” said St. John CES Principal, Teresa Lalonde Pankow. “Our students understand that the Ark will carry their intentions and

prayers to the Eucharistic Congress. We were thrilled the portageurs shared the story of the Ark; they are wonderful models for our students on this spiritual journey.”

For more information, please contact CDSBEO Communications Officer Bob Perreault at 613-258-7757 or 1-800-443-4562 ext. 206 or 613-859-0678 (mobile).

The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario operates 40 elementary and 10 secondary schools across 8 counties. The CDSBEO offers excellence in Catholic education through provincial-leading programs to approximately 15,000 students.

Attached Photos:

Ark1.jpg – Portageurs bring the Ark of the New Covenant inside St. John Catholic Elementary School in Perth.



Ark2.jpg – Students sit before the Ark of the New Covenant at St. John CES and listen to Portageurs, travelling with the Ark detail its history.

