

September 30, 2004

To: Chairs and Directors of Catholic District School Boards

Dear Colleagues:

Re: Policies on the Sourcing of School Uniforms and Other Supplies

We are writing to you on behalf of the Social Affairs Commission and the Education Commission of the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The bishops on our two Commissions are very aware that many Catholic boards in the province have developed, or are in the process of developing, policies aimed at ensuring that school uniforms, and some other supplies, are not produced under conditions which are unfair and unjust to workers in other countries.

We would like to encourage all of the students, teachers, parents, trustees and administrators who have been involved in this work. It truly is an example of Catholic social teaching being applied to a real situation. We are aware of the difficulty of developing policies which are enforceable and effective but the benefits derived are enormous.

Pope John Paul II has indicated that we have a duty to globalize what is wholesome and worthwhile in our society. By assisting students in this kind of endeavour, you are helping them to do so in a real situation to which they can relate. You are responding to the desire of our youth to make a difference in support of the common good about working conditions and standards not only in Canada, but also beyond our borders. They are learning that cynicism about the state of the world is much less productive than making an effort, in any way one can, to improve it.

We encourage you to continue these and similar worthwhile efforts to teach by modeling. The students, in particular, who have been involved in the development of such policies will carry the positive lesson they have learned with them for life.

Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. John Pazak
Chair, Social Affairs Commission

Most Rev. Paul-André Durocher
Chair, Education Commission

