**Board of Management – Opening Prayer**

**(Opening Meeting – Academic Year 2023/2024)**

A silhouette of a person holding a guitar

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**Chairperson:** We begin our Prayer, together, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.” And we light this candle as a sign and symbol of God’s loving presence with us as we begin our first meeting of this academic year. We begin by reflecting on a poem by Mary Oliver.

**Reader 1: The Summer Day by Mary Oliver.**

Who made the world?

Who made the swan, and the black bear?

Who made the grasshopper?

This grasshopper, I mean—

the one who has flung herself out of the grass,

the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,

who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down—

who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.

Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.

I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down

into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,

how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,

which is what I have been doing all day.

Tell me, what else should I have done?

Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

Tell me, what is it you plan to do

with your one wild and precious life?

**Chairperson:**

We take a moment to consider the following words from various sections of the CEIST Charter. These words all in their own way speak to the theme of our prayer service – vocation. A way of understanding the living out of vocation is as the free response to our unique calling to live our lives, in relationship with Jesus Christ, for the common good and in doing so to bring glory to God. If we live our lives with this vision and purpose, we each reach our own potential and live abundantly full lives. All of the quotations from the CEIST charter that follow might be understood in the context of the first CEIST Value; the promotion of spiritual and human development which states that, “We believe a knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ give meaning and purpose to our lives.”

**Reader 2:** Schools do not exist primarily for the service of the economy but for the service of the human person who is called to live in solidarity with other persons in search of the common good.

**Reader 3:** CEIST is built on the founding vision of the five Congregations, emphasising the dignity and rights of the human person, empowering the most vulnerable in society and enabling young people to become catalysts for social transformation throughout the world.

**Reader 4:** A CEIST school nurtures and supports the spirituality of each person, inspiring them to be fully alive human beings with hope and joy in their lives.

**Reader 5:** Students are encouraged to pursue truth, to recognise their own gifts, to care for the common good.

**Chairperson:** We pause for a moment to reflect on our lives and on the lives of those closest to us and the ways in which we and they live out their Christian vocation and the joy and fulfilment that such a way of living brings. Reflect for a moment; what is your vocation or calling? How does it bring you joy?

We listen now to the Word of God.

**Reader 6:**

A Reading from St Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as He wishes.

The Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

**Chairperson:**

*(NOTE: This is an additional optional part of the prayer service, that you can choose to lead BOM members through as you see fit. If your group would be more comfortable working in pairs on this that’s also a perfectly good way of doing this piece).*

So, we take a moment to reflect on the words of Mary Oliver, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?” We take to think together about the ways in which the living out of our callings has given us life and has helped change our lives and the lives of others. Questions like these might be helpful for you as you do this piece of reflection:

* What is your calling, personally and/or professionally?
* What has been the result of this calling?
* What change has this calling brought to your own life and to the lives of others.
* From where do you feel you’ve gotten this calling? How has it happened?
* How has it been a gift to you?
* How is being part of the BOM of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of school) part of living out your vocation?

We can use a sentence starter like.

***“In my life, I have discerned that I’ve been called to …………………..”***

**Principal:**

The task of a Board of Management is a significant one. In our work in the service of the students who come here to learn and to grow into a deeper awareness of what they are called to do with their unique giftedness, we pray:

* That each of us might continue to live lives out of a deep awareness of God’s love for us and the calling he gives to us which brings us closer to him and to others. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**
* That we might continue to inspire our students, at this especially important juncture in their lives, in terms of vocational awareness. That we would build into our work with students, moments of peace for them to listen deeply to God’s gentle whispering of love into their hearts. **Lord graciously hear us.**
* That our school might be a beacon of hope and consolation for the wider community in which we work, inspiring all who visit here and come here with a deep sense of welcome and care. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**
* That we would continue to exercise wisdom and prudence in all of our decision making here as the Board of Management of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**
* We take a moment to pray for our own intentions………………………… Lord hear us. **Lord graciously hear us.**

**Chairperson:**

Our CEIST prayer reminds us of all that we value here in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ We pray it now as custodians of all that we hold as important to our school.

Lord Jesus, you know me and you love me. You call me into **friendship** with you.

You call me to know and love you, especially through the **care** I give to others and the care I receive from others.

You call me to do my best, especially in the ways I seek to **learn** more about myself, others, and our world. In learning all of this, I learn also about you, my creator God.

All that I am you have given me and when I do my best I give glory to you my creator. You are very proud of me. In you, I know that my **dignity** is as wide as the ocean, my worth as deep as the sea.

You call me to **respect** myself and to respect others; to know that my **value** and the value of all the people in my school doesn’t come from results or achievements but from you, our creator.

You call us to be part of a school **community** that cares for us, that enjoys life, that has fun together and that comes to our help when we are sad or feeling alone.

You call our community to celebrate all the unique and wonderful **gift**s of the community, including my own gifts.

You call us to be **just and responsible**; to care for our planet, to have energy and passion for a more just world.

Lord Jesus, you know me and you love me. Help me to know and love you. AMEN.

A group of yellow flowers

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