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Pay for special education, not religion classes

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Re: Faith permeates Catholic education, Oct. 1.

Rev. Geoffrey Kerslake supports the funding of Catholic schools because teachers can freely ask students, "What would Jesus do?" I mean no disrespect to the Father but I am not sure he grasps the bigger picture. I have to wonder what Jesus would do if faced with the problem of knowing that roughly 25 per cent of Ontario's youth (including Catholic pupils) aren't graduating because our schools don't have the resources to help them succeed. Considering Jesus was the sort of man who could blow off preaching at the temple in order to minister to the needy, I think the answer is simple.

Jesus would support a single school system that could make maximum use of the available resources in order to reach more vulnerable students. What could be closer to doing the Lord's work than sacrificing a want in order to help needy children? As nice as it may be, a separate Catholic school system is not a need. Catholic priests and parents are entirely capable of teaching religion outside of school and no harm will befall Catholic children should they go to public schools.

Sadly, parents or priests can't help struggling students learn the Ontario curriculum (at least not easily) and not graduating with a high-school diploma can be very harmful to a young person's well being. Paying for Johnny's Catholicism in school should not be more important than paying for Mary's special education support so she can learn how to read or paying for Abdullah's ESL support so that he can adapt to a new school system and learn a new language.

I take it on faith that Jesus would agree.

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