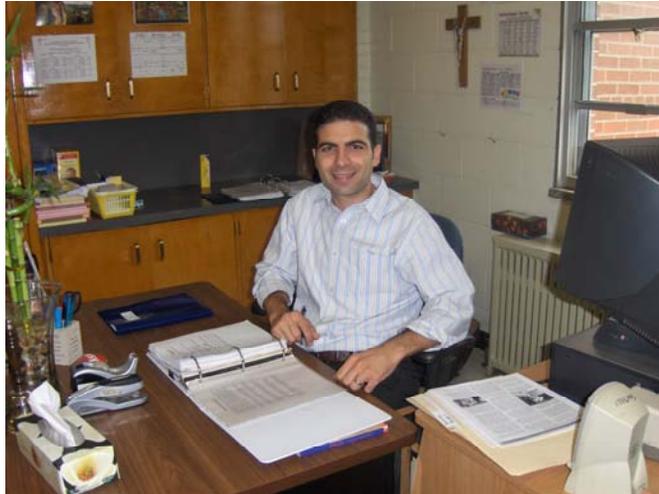


Robert Fantilli – Witnessing in a New Direction



My first career was in the financial planning field. While successful financially, I was unsatisfied from a fulfillment standpoint. Struggling with a decision to leave the profession and having met my wonderful wife Rosalia, I was inspired to explore new opportunities to align my daily devotion with my career objectives and to better understand God's plan for me. As such, I began to gain greater confidence through prayer in knowing what God was calling me to do. My academic pursuits were laid out for me in a manner that gave me a sense of accomplishment and peace that culminated with a post graduate degree in Curriculum Studies and Teacher Development at OISE/UT. After 2 years as an occasional teacher and Long-Term Occasional, I was blessed to secure a permanent position at St. Clement Catholic Elementary School where I currently serve as teacher.

Our focus as a TCDSB community of believers has been Word, Worship, and now Witness. I think the order in which this focus has been set is testament to the need to first concentrate on God's word as the foundation from which to build strong witnesses for Christ. After reading the word, meditating on it through prayer, we begin to understand the word the way God intended us to. We find meaning in ways we did not see before. As such, we begin to better understand the way God is not only working in our present lives, but how God has shaped our past experiences, relationships, and circumstances that have moulded us into the person God created us to be. From there we worship our creator through many avenues including song, prayer, and our daily actions. As we learn to be more forgiving, humble, faithful, and committed to Jesus, people can begin to notice something different about us. That is the beauty that opens the door to witness to those around us. In this way we not only support our brothers and sisters in Christ, but also witness to those who do not know the word.

How does one place that on a resume? I think the **Reference** portion would be those we pray with and for. I pray everyday with my students to ask God's blessing for the day. We then acknowledge any special intentions that we may have and name them by name. **Roles and Responsibilities** would be to walk in the word. Some of my students, former students and I go to Dr. Simone's Canadian Food for Children warehouse and help clean the facility or load containers with donated goods one Saturday per month. This is an activity I think they would be proud to list. Such a resume would also highlight our weaknesses, more importantly, the manner in which we seek to overcome the challenges we face as believers in a world that often makes justifying our actions easier than being accountable for them. **Awards and Honours** would emphasize the blessings we often take for granted: knowledge of where our next meal is coming from, ready access to clean water, the fact that we can walk, talk, breathe, eat and sleep - generally without pain. That we have a roof overhead, shoes on our feet, a job, a place to work where we are free to read and speak about God's grace and mercy without fear of prejudice, access to medical care, and the list would go on and on. In sum, the resume would illustrate how we spend our time with God, reflect a humble heart, and an open mind.

It is my hope that as I learn and grow in Christ, I will become ever so humble and be able to share the joy of a relationship with God with every student, colleague, parent and friend that God places in my path. We all face difficult circumstances. Recently, God called my father home as a good and faithful servant. This has taught me to reflect on the fragility of our lives and understand what is important when setting priorities. It is my hope that I can teach my students what God gave me in the gift of my dad. He taught me to pray, to make Jesus number one in my life, to always read God's word, and to make every effort to support those less fortunate than we. This may not be the calling of every servant of the Lord, but it sure is a great starting point and resonates with the spirit of God in every one of us.

Expressing faith is not as complicated as we think. What often makes finding ways to express our faith difficult is when we seek it out from a human perspective and forget to call on God to guide us. I would tell young Christians to get involved in activities that allow them to spend time in meaningful ways. Time is one of the most valuable gifts we can offer each other. Volunteering in the community is a great place to start. This can be as little as spearheading a food or clothing drive, clearing snow for a neighbour this winter, spending a few hours at a food bank or faith-based organization. Whatever the avenue, I recommend getting their hands dirty, giving freely with a joyful heart, and listening to God via prayer as to where God wants them to go from there. God needs people in every walk of life in every corner of the world. Matthew 9:36 says "*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*" We can never repay God for what He has already done for us, so I say get involved and have fun serving our living, wonderful, and amazing God!