



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Dear Pandit Jag Gossai and the Devi Mandir Community,

As the curriculum chair of Religious Education at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School, I am pleased to offer our sincere appreciation for your ongoing partnership in welcoming our Grade 11 World Religions classes to the Devi Mandir each year.

Our annual visits to the Devi Mandir, under the gracious guidance of Pandit Jag Gossai, have become a key learning experience for our Grade 11 Religious Education course. Through interfaith dialogue, prayer observation, and open conversation, our students encounter the Hindu faith tradition not simply as a topic of study, but as a lived and vibrant spiritual path.

The Grade 11 Religious Education curriculum, as outlined by the Institute for Catholic Education, calls students to “demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between religious tradition and culture” and to “respect the dignity of all persons in a spirit of dialogue and openness.” Our visits to the Mandir bring these expectations to life. Students deepen their understanding of Hindu beliefs, practices, symbols, and sacred space, while also developing empathy, critical thinking, and a more reflective understanding of their own faith commitments. Many students have commented that they have appreciated the authentic dialogue and have left Devi Mandir with fresh understanding and inspiration regarding the role that religious practice plays in people’s lives.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to fostering multiculturalism, interfaith dialogue, and building bridges in community. These excursions are actively supported by our school through funding for transportation, promotion within our community and the integration of preparatory and reflective coursework. Experiences at the Mandir help form young people who are better equipped to contribute thoughtfully and respectfully as responsible citizens.

We are very grateful for your hospitality, generosity of time, and willingness to engage our students year after year. We hope that the important work of facilitating interfaith exchanges will continue to grow. Please feel free to contact me at pbagnall@pvnccdsb.on.ca with any questions.

Warm Regards,

Peter Bagnall
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