

St. Michael's Chaplaincy Leader receives prestigious award

By Bill Rea

Urszula Cybulko is very good at her job, and that has been recognized by her peers.

The Chaplaincy Leader at St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Bolton was recently named the 2017 recipient of the Brian J. Halferty Award.

The award is presented to a Chaplaincy Leader currently serving in a school who contributes to the role of chaplaincy, above and beyond the regular demands of the position, which positively affects the role and position of all Chaplaincy Leaders in Ontario. She said she received the award April 19 at the conference of the Catholic School Chaplains of Ontario (CSCO).

And it was a surprise.

"Actually, I was pretty shocked," she said.

Cybulko added it would have been her fellow chaplains and teachers who nominated her for the award, but she has not yet received her copy of the nomination package.

"I think it's just my work over the years," she observed.

This is Cybulko's 30th year working in education, and she added she's planning to retire in June. Those 30 years have included five years as Chaplaincy Leader at Father Michael Goetz Secondary School in Mississauga, and she was the first one to fill that role when St. Michael opened in 2010.

"I love faith," she said, explaining her success at her job. "It's the core of who we are."

"It's an honour to minister to school communities," she added. "I love ministering. I think it was a natural call for me."

"We're missing something if we don't acknowledge that we're separate beings," she commented, adding it's important to give people the chance to explore that.

"We are pleased and proud of Urszula for receiving this prestigious award," St. Michael Principal Michelina Battaglini said. "To be recognized by her peers across the province speaks volumes to the work she does and we congratulate her on this special occasion."

"The greatest blessing for me is that I get to go to work every day and actively be on a faith journey," Cybulko said. "I can't imagine who I would have become if I didn't work in a faith community."

Cybulko said she's not sure what's going to come for her after retirement, but she's looking forward to finding out.

"I'm going to just discover new things," she said.

"God has many plans for us," she added, anticipating what's coming next. "I'm just as excited to end as I waste start."

