



The **Catholic Bishops**
of **Alberta**

Les **évêques catholiques**
de **l'Alberta**

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19 September 2018

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In Alberta, the yearly celebration of Catholic Education Sunday is an opportunity for Catholic schools and our faith communities to promote their important and distinctive mission.

In keeping with the theme for this year's Synod of Bishops: *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*, the theme for this Catholic Education Sunday is **Rejoice and Be Glad**. Our theme is further inspired by Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation and the call to holiness. It highlights the important role that our schools play in nurturing the call to holiness for our children and youth. Our schools also help students know Christ through religious education, prayer, and a safe, caring school community that encourages them to discern their vocations. Pope Francis reminds young people that Jesus looks to them and invites them to journey with him. They are urged to be open to God's plan in becoming joyful disciples.

Catholic Schools, along with the family and the parish community, support our young people in their journey of faith. Teachers, students, parents and priests together are witnesses to, and agents of, the Good News proclaimed by Jesus Christ. This faith witness is described in the apostolic exhortation as the "saints next door". It reminds us that in every circumstance there are people of faith who inspire us to respond openly to the love of God and to serve Him generously. Sustained by such a bold vision, Catholic Schools encourage students to grow in their faith, to live its principles and to act in ways that make a positive difference in their local communities and the global community.

The universal call to holiness has particular importance in the life of a Catholic School. Catholic education invites students to respond to the personal call of Jesus to embark on a journey of holiness. They are encouraged to grow in the knowledge of how God is active and present in their lives. They are called to enter into a living relationship with God.

Catholic schools put Christ, the witness of faith, and the teachings of the Catholic Church at the centre of the educational enterprise. By placing Christ at the centre of all they are and all they do, Catholic schools make sure that a student's journey into adulthood is also a journey of faith. A journey which recognizes that true knowledge, learning, justice, peace and human freedom are a response of love to the God who is Love.

We know that life is not without its challenges and temptations, which can distract our children and youth from responding to the call to holiness. ***“Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Mt. 5:12).*** This scripture quote, which roots the apostolic exhortation, recognizes that there will be many challenges in the quest for holiness. However, these challenges are not met with fear. They are met with courage and an assured confidence of the abiding presence of God. It is this confidence rooted in Christian hope that guides our Catholic Schools to instill and nourish, through many learning experiences, the belief that each child is created in the image of God and with God, all things are possible.

We, the Alberta and NWT Bishops, are grateful for parents who entrust their children to our Catholic School system and for parishes that minister to them. On Catholic Education Sunday, we express our appreciation for the administrative, professional, pastoral and support staff, who are dedicated to the noble task of assisting children and youth to follow the call to greater holiness. They help students grow in the assured belief that God journeys with them.


May God bless you and continue to sustain your faith-filled mission with His grace.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



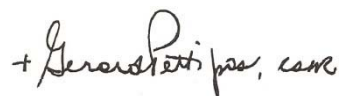
Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton



Most Reverend William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary



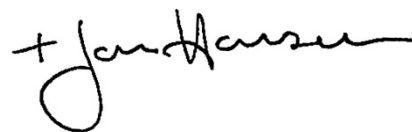
Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton



Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR
Archbishop Grouard-McLennan



Most Reverend Paul Terrio
Bishop of St. Paul



Most Reverend Jon Hansen CSsR
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith