



THE CATHOLIC DIMENSION

Speaking of Catholic Education in
Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon

Published by the *Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association*

December 2020

A Christmas Prayer

Loving Father, Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every
greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children, and
Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

(Author: Robert Louis Stevenson)



Serena Shaw **President's Message**

"Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." Luke 1: 28

Wouldn't it be easy if we were all visited by an angel sent by God that would share with us the plan God had for our lives?

God may not have sent an angel to most of us; however, He does have a plan and He does share it with us. And we are more like Mary than we think, in that we too must listen and then decide if we will answer God's call. One of the first things that the angel says to Mary is, "Do not be afraid." This is interesting to me, as there are really two things to be afraid of: the first is the obvious fear of being visited by an Angel; the second thing to be afraid of was God's request.

This is where we can find our similarities with Mary in that we are probably all afraid of what God is asking of us. So much so, we will even go out of our way to not listen to what God is leading us to. In today's culture, we are very used to believing that we are in control of our lives. We make plans about everything we do -- which in itself isn't a problem; however, are we taking time to discern what we are being called to? I think often we are not, but the bigger question may be: do we actually go out of our way to ignore what God is trying to tell us. Is it a passive 'not hearing', or an active act of ignoring?

I'm not sure I believe that if we really want to hear what God is saying to us it would be that difficult. I don't think God wants it to be that hard to discern his plans. I think what likely makes it difficult is that it doesn't always go along with our own plans. Remember that Mary made her decision for the whole world, for her community. Is this what makes us hesitate? It is definitely harder to decide something when it is for the greater good, rather than what is best for ourselves. Yet, this is exactly what we are called to do as Christians, as followers of Jesus.

I believe we often don't understand that by doing what is best for our community, we will make the best decision for ourselves. This is how we will be most fulfilled: by using our gifts and talents to serve our brother and sisters. I truly believe we are all God's favoured ones; maybe not in the way that Mary was in that she could carry the Son of God, but favored in how He loves us unconditionally. And so, my hope is that we can quit ignoring what we are called to do, and that we take the time to hear what is being asked of us so that we can find our vocation and say yes to God.

Those serving in the vocation of Catholic education have lived this reality of saying YES, during this challenging year of the COVID pandemic. Many times over they have answered the call of God by serving their students in heroic ways. It cannot be overstated how grateful we are to our teachers, administrators, parents, and community members who have chosen over and over again to answer God's call, often at the expense of their own health and well being.

'Favored one': may the peace of Christ be with you this Christmas and throughout the New Year! May God's grace protect and strengthen our commitment to vocation.



Submitted by: **Most Rev. William T. McGrattan**
Bishop of Calgary

The New Catechetical Directory and Catholic Education

The Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization released the new *Directory for Catechesis* in June of 2020. This is the third Directory for Catechesis that the universal Church has promulgated in recent history.

It began at the Second Vatican Council when the call to renew catechesis within the universal Church led to the publication of the first General Catechetical Directory (GCD) in 1971. In 1993, the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) initiated a second chapter of history with the release of the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) in 1997. The GDC basically expanded upon St. John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, which identified the six essential tasks of catechesis: Knowledge of the Faith; Liturgical Education; Moral Formation; Learning to Pray; Education for Community Life; and Missionary Discipleship and Service. Each of these catechetical tasks helps to deepen our relationship with Christ. Knowing Jesus calls us to ongoing conversion, which inspires a deeper life of prayer, the recognition of the needs of others, and the desire to respond to those needs in service, evangelization, and ministry.

In carrying out these six tasks of catechesis the Church relies on moments which coincide with the liturgical seasons. Catechesis also takes root in different places, the family or home, the parish and the Catholic school. It is the responsibility of many people, beginning with Pope Francis, the Bishops, pastors and catechists in parishes, teachers in our Catholic schools and parents.

In 2015, the Pontifical Council held a plenary meeting to discuss the relationship between catechesis and evangelization with representatives from around the world. During that meeting, the urgency of the new evangelization became evident and so did the need for a new directory - one that could assist dioceses, parishes, lay associations, and Catholic schools and families in fulfilling these tasks of catechesis.

This *Directory for Catechesis* (2020) highlights the important and inseparable link between evangelization and catechesis as a response to the realities of our times, particularly the advancements in digital communications and the need for evangelization at each stage of a person's life. Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of a missionary Church and a "discipleship of accompaniment" so that others will recognize Jesus' call in the love and service of His disciples.

There are three main parts to this new directory. *Part 1* focuses on the relationship between catechesis and the Church's mission of evangelization. It includes chapters on divine revelation and its transmission in the Church, the goals of catechesis, the vocation of catechists, and the formation of those who teach and hand on the Faith. *Part 2* focuses on the pedagogical process of catechesis with a particular emphasis on the Catechism of the Catholic Church and its use in catechesis and catechetical approaches. *Part 3*, the "Catechesis in Particular Churches," centers on the Christian community where catechesis takes place and makes the connection between a catechesis in the Faith and daily living. Part 3 addresses the role of the entire Christian community in catechesis - parishes, lay association and movements, and Catholic Schools – as well as the way in which catechesis responds to current issues, changing cultural contexts, and the structures within the Church that should exercise catechetical oversight and formation.

With Pope Francis' emphasis on missionary discipleship, the Directory for Catechesis urges those who teach the Faith to form followers of Jesus who can articulate their faith and live it in practical ways even when faced with opposing views and seemingly overwhelming global challenges. It is in this section that catechists are called to see how catechesis should stimulate social and political action related to the defense of life from conception to natural death, uphold human dignity for each person and exercise responsible stewardship of creation. There is also a section on catechesis and the growing digital culture. The digital world is a mission field and it holds a great potential for catechesis when used with discernment and wisdom.

The *Directory for Catechesis* (2020) is particularly useful for clergy, religious and lay people who are directly involved in the work of teaching, evangelization and catechesis at the parish or diocesan level, and in Catholic schools. For all who teach the Catholic faith, the new Directory provides a solid foundation which has benefited from the input of expert theologians and catechists from around the world. This new directory will be a valuable resource in strengthening the five marks of our Catholic schools and informing the ongoing work of formation in the Faith and the professional development of our Catholic educational leaders and teachers.

Catholic Educational Leadership: A Journey of Hope, Renewal, and Gratitude

This year's provincial Catholic education theme is: "Those who **hope** in the LORD will **renew** their strength" (Isaiah 40:31). Certainly the words of hope and renewal resonate deeply with each of us. This message of urgency, although fearful, reassures us of the Lord's guidance and protection. During COVID, the ever-changing landscape has been relentless, yet our hope continues to soar to new heights.

Just as we settle in, disruption enters. I have heard colleagues describing this ability to adapt and change as, "building the plane while it's flying." This visual representation not only articulates the need to keep "flying" but also to make the necessary adaptations while on the journey.



Leadership -- and specifically Catholic educational leadership -- has been exemplary, rising to these challenges beyond measure. From the provincial perspective, not only have our Catholic leaders served



Submitted by:
Eugenia Kowalczyk, Ph.D.
Executive Director

their vocation by remaining focused on student learning, but also ensuring the Catholic identity remains at the core of their mission.

Questions that continue to resonate include: How anchored are we as a Catholic educational community? How do we cling to the hope of our faith during challenging times, personally and professionally? Where do we find Christ in the work that we do?

At the heart of Catholic education is Jesus Christ. Without this foundational belief Catholic schools need not exist. Richard Rymarz (2016) states, "the primary goal of a Catholic school is the development of the human person

within the context of a deepening relationship with Christ” (p. 17).

In the front entrance of several of our school divisions is a beautiful image depicting the message, “Be it known to all who enter here that Christ is the reason for this school. He is the unseen but ever-present teacher in its classes. He is the model for its staff and the inspiration for its students.”

Explicit articulation of Christ’s beliefs is indeed the distinction between Catholic and public schools. Catholic schools have the constitutional freedom to talk about the life of Christ, the teachings of Christ through the parables, and the inspiration Christ provides for our daily living.

The stakes for Catholic educational leadership are high as we hold the mission of Catholic education fervently through the vocation we serve. Acknowledging that the challenges facing Catholic education are at the forefront of public discourse prompts the importance of articulating their distinctive mission and vision: “in a globalized, postmodern world that is characterized by moral relativism, secularism and materialism (poses) considerable challenges” (Fincham, 2010, p.64). Therefore, at a time when the secular world continues to depict faith-based education as an antiquated and

redundant model, the resolve to renew our hope in publicly funded Catholic education remains central to our leadership, our vocation, the preservation of our mission, and ultimately the strengthening of our Catholic identity.

Pope Francis affirms the importance of Catholic education by stating:

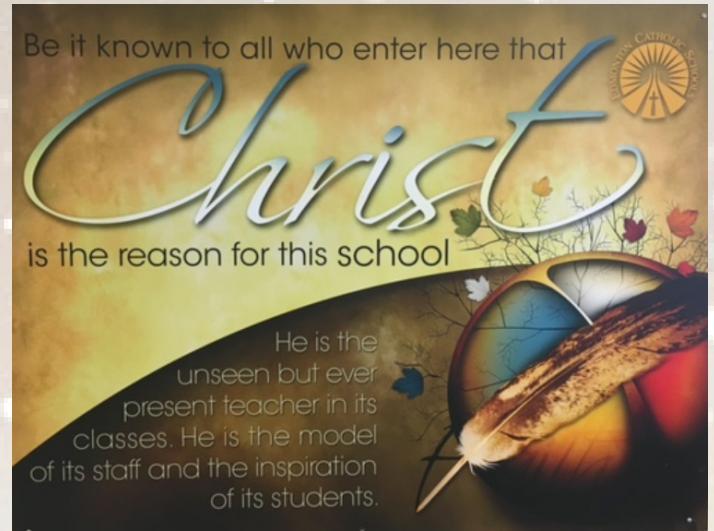
School is one of the educational environments where one grows by learning how to live, how to become grown-up, mature men and women...the essential element in school is learning to be magnanimous...this means having a big heart, having a greatness of soul. It means having grand ideals, the desire to achieve great things in response to what God asks of us and, precisely because of this, doing everyday things, all our daily actions, commitments, and meetings with people well. It means doing the little everyday things with a big heart that is open to God and to others.
(Francis, 2013, Address of Pope Francis to the students of the Jesuit Schools of Italy and Albania).

During this time of COVID, our provincial Catholic education theme resonates deeply with the mission of Catholic education. How beautiful to know that faith inspires and influences our



professional, personal, and spiritual life. Ultimately, as Catholic educational leaders, in whichever ministry we are called to serve -- teacher, administrator, trustee, school secretary, custodian, Bishop, Sister, student, or parent -- we tirelessly dedicate our work to building the Kingdom of God.

It is precisely during these challenging times that we draw upon our Catholic identity, our spiritual capital, to forge new opportunities to strengthen and renew our hope that is rooted in Christ. This we embody in our schools, our home, and our communities. This we nurture and grow in the stillness of our heart by honouring the past, celebrating the present, and shaping the future of publicly funded Catholic education.



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Be still,
and know that
I am God

Psalms 46:10



The HOPE of Catholic Education is in the LORD



Submitted by:

Brendan Cavanagh

**Director of Government Relations
and Advocacy, ACSTA**

"Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom." St. Pope John Paul II

"Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ." Pope Pius XI

This being my first contribution to *Catholic Dimension*, I decided to take the opportunity to introduce myself as ACSTA's new Director of Government Relations and Advocacy and to outline my thoughts on publicly-funded Catholic education in Alberta. I applied for this role first and foremost out of a sincere sense of vocation. For 8 years prior to this I had been working in the administration of the University of Alberta in a variety of capacities. In 2015 I completed RCIA and was confirmed at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Sherwood Park, and, though I am still quite passionate about higher education, I increasingly felt called to work that was more explicit and intentional about its moral mission.

While completing my masters degree, I started more seriously contemplating the essential

purpose of education. It serves multiple purposes, of course, but as Catholics it is important that we be very clear with respect to our ordering of these things. Having already worked in international higher education for many years, and having studied in five rather disparate countries, I recognized with a certain degree of confidence that our world had (dis)ordered the primary purpose of education towards power -- economic, technological, discursive, etc.

Perhaps this is rather obvious. After all, everyone knows education yields knowledge and, as the cliché does, 'knowledge is power'. And there is nothing intrinsically wrong with power, which may be used for good as well as ill. St. Paul wrote that "the desire of money is the root of all evils..." (1 Timothy 10); he does not categorize money itself as evil -- *desire* thereof is where the problems start. This holds equally true for all such repositories of power, whether they be money, status, or even knowledge. Education, then, as a means of attaining knowledge, should *not* be understood as inherently good and worthy of our desire, as a final ends and purpose of life's efforts. On its own, it will never fully satisfy the soul. That

this world, while in possession of more money and technology and education than ever before in history, remains perpetually malcontent, should give us reason to pause. In truth, it is yet impoverished.

Catholic education has enormous potential to help ease our current spiritual desolation. This is because it is ordered first towards Jesus Christ, who is Truth ("I am the way, the truth and the life..." John 14:6). An authentically Catholic education forms and orders the human soul towards goodness, truth and beauty -- the source of which is God (CCC, 41) -- because only He will truly satisfy the soul. Yes, a Catholic education may, in fostering a love for truth, beauty and goodness, incidentally also provide graduates with the ability to attend prestigious post-secondary institutions and/or to secure lucrative employment. Yet, the *purpose* of cultivating these virtues in our children is not for them to get into a good school or get a good job, but to help them know and love and serve the Lord, and, after this fleeting mortal life, to hopefully share in His Resurrection.

Despite our fundamentally unique understanding of the purpose of education, Catholics in Alberta still hear assimilationist arguments on a recurring basis. These sometimes seem to hinge on the assumption that children can be educated in a sort of 'objective' manner, in a way that is 'free' of any so-called 'subjective values'. Such an attitude, I would argue, is the exact opposite of tolerance, and serves to demonstrate just how differently we view reality. I can think of nothing less 'free' than an education free of metaphysical purpose. As discussed above, the *most* important quality of education for a Catholic is a very particular moral formation modelled on Christ -- we simply *cannot* separate our learning and our faith. Furthermore, as an adult convert to Catholicism and a product of the public school system myself, I highly doubt the ability of anyone, Catholic or otherwise, to

sincerely compartmentalize themselves in this way.

I also have difficulty with the notion that Catholic education should be the exclusive privilege only of those with the means to afford it, while simultaneously paying for public schools that may very well instill teachings contrary to those of my faith in my own four children. Generations of our forebears successfully defended the right of Catholics in Alberta to fund their own separate education system; without this I would be forced -- as are most Catholics in this country today, despite the crucial role that this right played in securing Catholic support for Confederation -- to fund a system in which my own children are taught to treat the Church, the Bride of Christ, as irrelevant (at best). It should be an unacceptable proposition to every Catholic.

Even just a cursory glance at history will demonstrate just how much the Catholic conception of education has to offer this province; not only for Catholics, but all Albertans. Catholics started schools in Alberta before it was a province, and in Canada before it was a country. Even the institution of the university (the historical development of which is the focus of my current doctoral work in education policy studies) is a product of Catholic culture and thought. Alberta's education system has long been considered to be among the world's best, and it has done so inclusive of our publicly-funded Catholic schools.

The opportunity that we have in Alberta should never be taken for granted. If we do not advocate for our publicly-funded Catholic school system then we are certain to lose it in the same way other jurisdictions in this country already have. I intend to fully utilize the experience, education and talents God has granted me in order to serve Him and the Church in this role. Please remember to keep me and this mission in your prayers. I very much look forward to working with you all.



Submitted by:
Bonnie Annicchiarico, Ph.D.
Director - GrACE

Worried...Weary...Weak

In all likelihood, all men and women engaged in Catholic Education have arrived in its vineyards with more worry and weariness than they wanted to bring. We have come like the original cast of characters. We have come weak (Build Bethlehem Everywhere, 2002)

Worried...weary...weak. I can't think of a more accurate description for how I am feeling at this COVID Christmas time. I am worried for the health of those I love. I am weary of working from home and trying to be effective in a very different reality. I am weary as a mom, a grandmother, wife, friend and advocate. Yes, it's been a lot.

How meaningful it is for me to connect these very real emotions to those of the Holy Family and their community at that very first Christmas. Mary, delivering a baby in an unknown town, without shelter or midwife. Joseph, taking responsibility for his family in circumstances he cannot control. The innkeeper, unable to help in a time of need, yet taxed beyond his capacity with the crowds that have arrived in Bethlehem. The shepherds, poor and humble arriving with nothing but themselves and their flock to witness God's greatest miracle.

As a Catholic educator, I am always on the search for resources and inspiration to deepen my understanding of Catholic Education. No document has been more powerful for me than [Build Bethlehem Everywhere](#) (CCSTA, 2002). In a mere 48 pages, the identity, vision and mission of our Catholic schools is shared through beautiful

language and stunning imagery. Small but mighty, this treatise on Catholic Schools explores the depth and breadth of this gift we are called to nurture and protect. Advent is the perfect time to return to the wisdom of Build Bethlehem Everywhere (BBE).

Who among us, a year ago, could have imagined the Christmas we would be experiencing in 2020? At no time in recent memory has our society been so challenged to trust and hope in the saving grace of God. Our schools especially, have been bombarded by the evolution of this pandemic. Our teachers and staff have become the front line workers. They have sacrificed; they have loved; and they will arrive at Christmas (like most of us) disappointed and concerned for their own welfare and that of their family and students. Without doubt they are exhausted.

This year the uniting theme for Catholic Education in Alberta has been one of hope and renewal: *Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.* Isaiah 40:31 This scripture was chosen specifically for these times and in recognition of the unique ability of Catholic schools to be havens of hope in the midst of COVID. Our Catholic schools have persevered with a spirit of trust and an unwavering recognition that God is with us. When trials arise, when illness enters, when anxiety is overwhelming, Catholic schools embrace and assure that we will get through this together; you are not alone.

What makes Catholic education distinct is our encounter with Jesus. Each prayer, each act, each interaction is rooted in faith. Jesus is present in every encouraging email, every late night lesson plan, every kindness and in all tender words. Although the journey has been long and arduous, we have not been alone. That is the gift of Catholic Education.



In Catholic Education it is our ageless desire in Christ to let no person be held at bay from the love of God because they fear their weakness will find no welcome. It is also our greatest care that none are separated from the love of Christ because we failed to build a Bethlehem that could welcome their weakness. In this sense, every school we have ever built must become Bethlehem." (Build Bethlehem Everywhere, 2002)

Religious Education and the Black Lives Matter Movement

Submitted by: Dr. Matt Hoven
Kule Chair of Catholic Religious Education
St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta



I haven't been able to bring myself to watch the final eight minutes of George Floyd's life. I don't think I ever will. This hasn't stopped me from knowing the details of his painful death and the unprecedented reaction around the world. As religious educators, you and I can identify with the pain of senseless dying; we need only to recall the crosses and crucifixes hanging in our classrooms and homes. Empathy for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement should surely feel second nature to us.

Showing solidarity with the BLM movement and its cries against racial injustice is, as a Protestant friend of mine declared, the godly thing to do. When 19th-century English theologian John Henry Newman (now a saint) became a cardinal, he took for his motto "Heart speaks to heart," or, in the original Latin, *Cor ad cor loquitur* (Mansfield 2011). The phrase, constructed from a number of sources in the Christian tradition, encourages us to speak heart to heart with God, who searches for us as the Good Shepherd¹ and waits for us like the father of the Prodigal Son.² We extend that tender attitude when we bring mercy and forgiveness to our family and friends—and to our neighbours. It also means encouraging other staff members and comforting marginalized students. "Heart speaks to heart" requires an openness to God's grace in all circumstances—which ultimately leads to charity for others, especially today for those suffering racial prejudice.

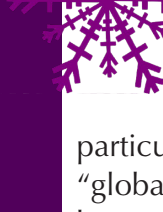
Who are saints that ethnically reflect the student bodies in our schools? Or, better, where are racially diverse saints who can challenge our primarily Caucasian images of sainthood?

To put on the attitude of "heart speaks to heart," here are four initial means for religious educators to support the BLM movement in faith-based schools.

The first is straightforward: teach the approved religious education program. For instance, many places in the K–12 Catholic religious education program in Alberta address the Catholic Church's social teachings and thus open the door to denouncing racism. Because social teachings often receive greater emphasis

later in a number of the programs, there is a risk that educators might review these doctrines only briefly or even forget them. Teaching the approved curricular program ensures that social teaching topics are addressed in the religious education classroom.

Next, Christian social teachings cannot be left solely in the hands of religious educators. Grace (2016), in a book chapter on Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 *Caritas in Veritate*,³ demands that Catholic secondary schools engage in social teachings in order to build up their distinctive religious and educational programming. Student engagement with social teachings challenges young people (and teachers) to take morality seriously when weighing social and economic issues. This requires permeating or integrating social teachings across the curriculum. Grace uses Pope Benedict XVI's image of contrasting a "heart of stone" and a "heart of flesh" to determine a divinely inspired way for humanity (p 212).⁴ In



particular, Grace connects “hearts of stone” to today’s “globalised materialism”: a world view constructed by uncritical acceptance of capitalism, an unreflective culture of dissatisfaction and a broad rejection of spiritual values. Its downplaying of the spiritual life and its disparagement of the power of virtues such as mercy, love, justice and peace necessitate a strong rebuttal from Christian social teachings across the curriculum.

Outside of the approved curriculum, two further examples can support the BLM movement: the lives of saints and school liturgies.

Think about the school patrons in your district or the pictures of saints in your school. For example, Catholic schools in my surrounding neighbourhoods in Edmonton are all named after people of European descent, except for St Augustine Catholic Elementary School, which commemorates Saint Augustine (of Hippo), a North African. (However, he is generally celebrated more for his Latin-ness than his African-ness.) Who are saints that ethnically reflect the student bodies in our schools? Or, better, where are racially diverse saints who can challenge our primarily Caucasian images of sainthood? Consider the lives of saints Charles Lwanga and Lorenzo Ruiz. Or hear of the trials encountered by the tens of thousands of Vietnamese martyrs commemorated each year on November 24. Surely, celebrating the life of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha is especially important, given that one of the competencies in Alberta’s *Teaching Quality Standard* (Alberta Education 2019) is applying foundational knowledge about Indigenous peoples. A legacy of St John Paul the Great (Pope John Paul II) is that he canonized saints at an increased pace to show, in part, the universal appeal of the Christian faith. This move signals a growing diversity in Christianity, as Canadians can witness in churches across the country (Bibby and Reid 2016). (Noteworthy here is the book *Every Tribe: Stories of Diverse Saints Serving a Diverse World*, edited by Prentis [2019], which offers stories of diverse saints across the Christian tradition.)

School liturgies are another way to support the BLM movement. American religious educator Sister Thea Bowman (1937–1990) challenged the Church in the second half of the 20th century to improve its reception of the gifts and talents of African Americans (Walker and Smith, nd). Bowman, who was raised in a segregated Mississippi, advocated for the incorporation of

Black music, traditions and cultures into the life of the Church: “Black sacred song celebrates our God, His goodness, His promise, our faith and hope, our journey toward the promise” (Bowman 1987). She explained the educational power of the music:

Teaching the songs of faith required definite cognitive, affective, and behavioral objectives; use of right and left brain teaching–learning techniques; participatory learning; reality-based learning; value learning; multi-sensory appeal; involvement of intellect, memory, imagination, will and body. The methodologies are simple and engaging. (Bowman 1993, 50–51)

Music and the arts are powerful vehicles for showing solidarity and inspiring action. Worshipping according to a spiritual tradition other than our own expands our image of God and reminds us that Christianity is a world religion—not a white man’s concoction.

In light of the BLM movement, religious educators should rethink and rededicate themselves to Newman’s motto “Heart speaks to heart.” This stance is particularly important for the response of faith-based schools to the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). By promoting the Church’s social teachings and celebrating various cultures in the Christian tradition, we can promote solidarity with all peoples in local Catholic schools.

Notes

1. John 10:1–21 (NRSV-CE).
2. Luke 15:11–32 (NRSV-CE).
3. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 2009, www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html (accessed September 21, 2020).
4. Ezek 36:26 (NRSV-CE).

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Seeking “Pastoral Conversion” amidst “Pandemic Immersion”

Catholic superintendents and trustees started their school year on July 21, 2020 in conference calls with the ministry about COVID-19. Like all educational leaders and governors in Alberta, our collective attention was on how to develop division re-entry plans that equipped our schools with personal protective equipment; cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing cleaning supplies; floor stickers to keep individuals 2m apart; signs for daily screens; and health protocols to be safe. In the midst of this necessary preoccupation with safety, as I began my CCSSA Presidency, I wondered: *How would we shift from such a “safety obsessed” start to our year towards a “spiritually focused” foundation for our work together?*

To engage more deeply in this question, our CCSSA Executive Director, Michael Hauptman, and I met with our ACSTA Executive partners who had decided to refocus their AGM and faith formation as their starting point as opposed to the planned shared ACSTA-CCSSA professional development session in November. This inspired us to do the same, and, in conversation with our Executive and several CCSSA members, we were encouraged to refocus in a more concentrated manner on faith formation in both a spiritual and pragmatic way for our November session with Catholic superintendents.

Following our meetings with ACSTA and CCSSA Executives, Michael and I met with Archbishop Smith and Bishop McGrattan. We sought their counsel about how best to frame faith formation for our November CCSSA meeting. Bishop McGrattan suggested a Liturgy of the Word focused on the Parable of the



Submitted by: **Dr. Rhonda Nixon**
President CCSSA

Good Samaritan, which was central to our Holy Father’s encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. Archbishop Smith stated that what mattered most was to resist the temptation to retreat into a “maintenance mindset” during times of crisis in favor of being “radically embraced” by the call for “pastoral conversion” in faith formation as a Catholic community. To that end, we structured our day with Catholic system leaders to take up this challenge of seeking pastoral conversion by responding collectively to the Holy Spirit through faith formation.

On November 12th, Bishop McGrattan led us in Liturgy of the Word based on the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In his reflections, he drew from Pope Francis who asked, “Why do we allow people to hurt others?” His Excellency shared a number of reasons-- we lose our sense of the common good; we succumb to an attitude of weariness and indifference; and, in the pandemic especially, we are lost in the bombardment of daily

media in which human experiences are objectified rather than personalized. While retreating can become second nature in a crisis, Archbishop Smith challenged us to collectively and individually “shake off” this “maintenance-focused” mindset to hold tightly and relentlessly to embodying “mission-centeredness” as Catholic leaders. In essence, he called us to resist “pandemic immersion” for “pastoral conversion” through “attentive listening” to the Holy Spirit. He noted that we would recognize the call of the Holy Spirit in moments of creative, bold actions to respond to the impulse of the Gospel in our work.

As we were blessed to dialogue with a panel of Catholic leaders, boldness, courageousness, and creativity was palpable in what was shared by Archbishop Smith, Bishop McGrattan, Superintendent Szumlas, and Superintendent Moroziuk. As we listened to the stories of how each panel member was shaking off “pandemic immersion” for “pastoral conversion,” I was struck by how two new superintendents shared their “bold starts” to an unprecedented year. They each sustained a relentless focus on faith in their start-ups with school and division leaders.

Superintendent Moroziuk spoke about breaking bread with staff in his “brown bag lunches” and meeting each parish priest to ensure a close partnership between parish-home-school, while respecting all health measures, as well as seeking creative ways to animate the Division’s faith theme, “ARISE: Get up! Get going! Go with God!” He explained how he had found little music to support this theme, but, while driving home one day, he was inspired to write a song. Although challenging amidst the many things in start-up, he joyously shared his song that inspired energy within our community as it had done for their Division’s faith community. Similarly, Superintendent Szumlas shared how he sought to make “every moment a God moment,” and he worked with his Division leaders to co-develop a visual to encapsulate their theme which initially emerged as a “community of caring.” He shared the resulting visual, which is a stylistic primary color heart with a cross in the center depicting their theme, “Creating Calgary Catholic Together.”

They have explored ways to enact this theme in the pandemic context through Bishop McGrattan’s online liturgies, GrACE activities engaged in digitally, and a touching song written and shared by a high school student. Both superintendents noted that a minimalist agenda focused on faith formation assisted them individually and collectively to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit and to be creative and bold in embracing the urgent call to be models and witnesses of Jesus Christ as Catholic leaders.

Although I began my role in this unprecedented year with a worry about how to stay spiritually focused rather than safety obsessed as CCSSA, our bold beginnings to stay steadfastly focused on faith formation as Catholic superintendents has renewed our collective energy to be creative in crisis. As Pope Francis shared in his conversation with Austen Ivereigh (2020), “To act in a Samaritan way in a crisis means letting myself be struck by what I see...taking up and embracing the cross” (p.3). Thank you to our partnerships with Alberta Catholic Trustees and Alberta Bishops to embrace faith formation as the road to embracing the cross to see new life and hope within a pandemic.

Reference

Ivereigh, A. (2020). *Let us dream: The path to a better future*. New York: Simon & Schuster.



the body of *Reimagined* Christ

Covid-19 was first reported in Wuhan, China in December of 2019, and in early 2020, the Chinese state media announced its first death from novel coronavirus. In an attempt to stem the spread of the virus, China imposed aggressive containment measures in Wuhan, suspending flights and trains and shutting down subways, buses, and ferries. But the virus was highly contagious, and it spread rapidly and evolved quickly in the human population.

By the end of January, the World Health Organization declared a public health emergency of international concern. And by the end of February, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed its first North American case of Covid-19 in a patient in Seattle, Washington. Scenes of overwhelming grief and fear began to fill our television and computer screens as the world around us was experiencing the affects and impacts of the pandemic, and country after country was closing its borders.

It is difficult to comprehend the months since March the 13th, the day the province of Alberta declared its own public health emergency. The early weeks were especially challenging as school closures forced staffs to balance teaching at home and working from home, with the responsibilities of everyday life. Many suffered through the pandemic as an unwelcome experience of isolation and loneliness, and the negative feelings were understandable. We were thrust into this new normal kicking and screaming.

Many school divisions across the province laboured tirelessly to maneuver the obstacles and sudden changes of the pandemic, and Edmonton Catholic Schools was no different. For over twenty years, our division had celebrated its annual Faith Development Day together at the Convention Centre. But on Thursday, October the 29, 2020, the world was a very different place. No longer able to gather in large groups, our faith day, deeply rooted in our faith and uniting us together in the Body of Christ, was reimagined as



a virtual experience that included a Eucharistic Liturgy with Division Chaplains Father Glenn and Father Julian, keynote addresses by David Wells, musical interludes by Jesse Manibusan, and opportunities to pray, listen, learn, and share.

While Covid devastated our school division's traditional way of forming community, the resilience of the human spirit remained. Not unlike our Faith Development Day, people around the world found other ways in which to gather, becoming technologically versed in using ZOOM and TEAMS as well as other online platforms to connect with family and friends, to teach, to conduct business, and to pray and worship.

Sometimes when adversity befalls us, the challenges may seem insurmountable. Yet even in the midst of struggle and heartache, moments of Grace

are possible. Even in the midst of the unknown and the cold reality of the pandemic, Grace surrounds us and helps us. While the faith days of the past, celebrated together physically and spiritually, were important, the virtual experience was no less significant. Void of the pomp and circumstance that often afflict large impersonal events, the re-imagined faith day provided staff with a more intimate venue in which to learn and share. It was a welcome distraction and a much-needed reprieve.

The first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians tells us that "just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many" (1 Corinthians 12: 12-14). We need each other. We are relational beings. As time passes and quarantining spreads and tightens, we are learning our need for one another in ways we may not have expected.

While the online world may never be a perfect substitute for real-life communities, we can still unite virtually in authentic and genuine ways as the Body of Christ.



Faith Development 2020-2021





Legally Speaking

Submitted by: Simon Elzen-Hoskyn and Cristina Wendel, Dentons Canada LLP

Court of Appeal Upholds Protection for Non-Catholic Students to Attend Catholic Separate Schools; Supreme Court of Canada May Hear Appeal in 2021

This year, the Court of Appeal of Saskatchewan overturned a problematic decision that would have had far reaching impacts on Catholic education in Canada. *The Government of Saskatchewan and Christ the Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 212 v Good Spirit School Division No. 204* is often referred to as the “Theodore” case, named after the village in Saskatchewan where the events giving rise to the litigation occurred. The ultimate decision may be made by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2021 or 2022.

On March 12-13, 2019, the Court of Appeal heard argument from the Government of Saskatchewan, Christ the Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 212 (“Christ the Teacher”), Good Spirit School Division No. 204 (“Good Spirit”), and five separate intervenors in the Theodore case. The Alberta Catholic School Trustees’ Association appeared as an intervenor at the appeal, with Dentons Canada LLP acting as counsel.

The trial decision, written by Justice Layh and released on April 20, 2017 (the “Trial Decision”) determined that s. 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* (and its counterpart, s. 17(1) of the *Saskatchewan Act*), which provide constitutional protection for Catholic separate schools in Saskatchewan, did not provide a constitutional right to government funding for non-Catholic students to attend separate schools. The Trial Decision went on to find that government funding for non-Catholic students to attend Catholic separate schools violates religious freedom and equality rights, which are protected under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Trial Decision would have had the consequence of eliminating funding for non-Catholic students attending separate schools. This would effectively make separate schools prohibitively expensive for non-Catholic students and their families, and would also require students to provide proof of Catholic identity in order to obtain funding.

At the appeal, ACSTA argued, among other things, that it has always been the practice of Catholic separate schools to invite students of all faiths to attend and receive education. ACSTA reminded the Court of Appeal that in Alberta, as in Saskatchewan, there is a documented history of non-Catholic students being integrated into Catholic schools without any concern that this would compromise the legitimacy of the Catholic education. ACSTA also encouraged the Court to avoid an outcome that would require the government to decide whether or not a student has adequately proven his or her Catholic faith.

On March 25, 2020, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal released its decision (the “Appeal Decision”). In a unanimous decision of all five justices, the Appeal Decision overturned the Trial Decision in resounding fashion. While the full Appeal Decision was over 120 pages long, some of the most important points made by the Court of Appeal were:

- The current system in Saskatchewan allows parents to choose between two parallel publicly funded education systems. Because of this, non-Catholic students may attend Catholic separate schools if they wish, and Catholic students may also attend public, secular schools.
- Good Spirit did not even have the ability to bring this case in the first place. As a public body, Good Spirit could not assert that its *Charter* rights (i.e. freedom of religion and equality rights) had been infringed. In fact, the Court found that Good Spirit was essentially advancing a “market share” argument, in order to obtain more funding.
- Section 17(2) of the *Saskatchewan Act* resolves the entire question, as it guarantees equal funding to Catholic separate schools and is not subject to any qualifying criteria, such as the “denominational aspects test”, which would limit the constitutional protection of funding to only the “essentially Catholic” elements of education.
- The evidence supports that Catholic doctrine embraces the inclusion of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools.
- Section 93(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* / s. 17(1) of the *Saskatchewan Act* do not truly play a role in this case. Section 93(1) protects denominational rights from prejudicial effects of Government actions, and yet there was no suggestion that the government is taking away any right or privilege guaranteed to Catholic separate schools. As a result, the Court found this analysis to be an “artificial exercise”.
- Government funding for non-Catholic students to attend Catholic separate schools does not violate the freedom of religion or equality rights protected by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The Appeal Decision was an emphatic victory for Catholic separate schools, not only in Saskatchewan, but also in Alberta and Ontario, where funding for separate schools could potentially have been impacted by the Trial Decision as well. The Appeal Decision implicitly upholds that:

- Parental choice in education is valuable and should be supported.
- The Constitutional protections afforded to Catholic education are good, even though they are a result of political compromise.
- Having two parallel publicly funded school systems is a positive model and there is no reason to discontinue it.

On May 19, 2020, Good Spirit filed an application for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada (“SCC”). At this time, Good Spirit, the Government of Saskatchewan, and Christ the Teacher have all filed arguments with the SCC stating why (or why not) the SCC should decide to hear an appeal by Good Spirit of the Appeal Decision. Due to COVID-19, the SCC timelines have been extended somewhat, and the SCC has not yet rendered a decision on whether or not to hear the appeal. We expect the SCC to

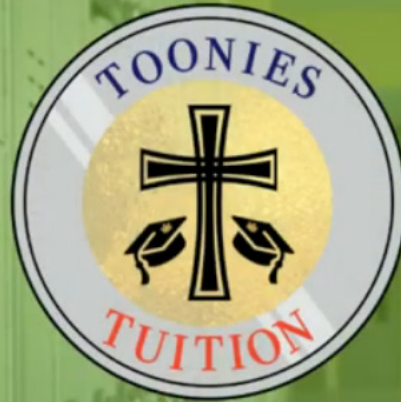
release a decision in early 2021, at which time potential intervenors will be able to apply to the SCC to make submissions as intervenors at the hearing.

While it is difficult to determine how the SCC will decide, the fact that the Appeal Decision was unanimous weighs in favour of the SCC declining to hear Good Spirit's appeal. However, if the SCC decides to hear the appeal, we would expect that this matter would come before Canada's highest court for a final determination in late 2021 or in 2022.

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God of power and mercy open our hearts in welcome.
Remove the things that hinder us from receiving
Christ with joy so that we may share his wisdom
and become one with him when he comes in glory, for
he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, forever and ever. Amen.





Canadian Catholic School
Trustees' Association

to support **Toonies for Tuition**

What a difference \$2 can make

Did you know that many families in Canada need to pay tuition to attend their local Catholic school? Our charitable foundation alleviates the financial burden on Catholic families who live in a province where Catholic education has limited or no public funding through the CCSTA Endowment Fund.

Toonies for Tuition, the official campaign for the CCSTA Endowment Fund, is asking for your help in fundraising for this worthwhile initiative. Every year, there are more requests than funds available, so help us turn that around. Consider joining our campaign to share the gift of Catholic education.

Donate

Social Media ACSTA



GrACE @GrACE4cathed · Aug 29
#IBelieveinCatholicEd

Catholic Register @CatholicRegistr · Aug 29
Canadian Catholic school boards are about to embark upon a September unlike any other due to #COVID19. Amongst this uncertainty, Catholic school leaders from coast to coast are certain that upholding a tight-knit bond with the Church is paramount.



FrancoSud @CSFrancoSud · Sep 10
Ne te rend pas au bout du rouleau, il y a toujours une autre option!

Voici la thématique du projet Appartenance pour la journée mondiale de la prévention du suicide 2020, plusieurs ateliers ont lieu dans nos écoles.

Prenez-soin de vous 😊

Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton @archedmonton · Sep 2

The Catholic Bishops of #Alberta and #NWT have written new pastoral letter entitled *Uniting Ourselves in Prayer as Schools Reopen*. #yegmedia #abed

We ask the Lord to provide us all with His grace, comfort, and protection.

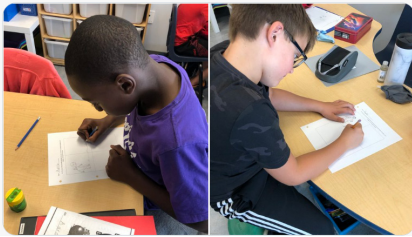


OCSTA @CatholicEdu · Sep 8
Wishing all our school board communities the very best for a great beginning today. Thank you to all the staffs and families for your preparation and support. Peace and prayers for a joyful start and a blessed 20-21 year.



FrancoSud @CSFrancoSud · Sep 22
Pour souligner la journée mondiale de la paix, les étudiants étaient invités à s'exprimer sur la signification du mot paix et à réaliser une bande dessinée qui représente des gestes de paix dans la vie de tous les jours!

#franco #abed #InternationalDayOfPeace



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 5

Today we celebrate our teachers who not only make the world a better place but also contribute to the excellence of education in AB. #ABED #WorldTeacherDay

THANK YOU TEACHERS

jason schilling @schill_dawg · Oct 5

Today is World Teachers' Day and this year Alberta teachers will join over 32 million teachers in 172 countries globally to celebrate and reflect on the work we do. #WorldTeacherDay @CTFFCE @albertateachers

Blessed Marie-Rose School @BMRose_CCSD · Oct 13

Look at these 🌟. So amazed by our students work on describing our FAITH meaning. Such powerful messages. A special thanks to our Catholic Community of Caring committee for their hard work and planning. ❤️



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 15

Pope Francis urges educators "to listen to the voices of children and young people to whom we pass on values and knowledge, in order to build together a future of justice, peace and a dignified life for every person." #IBelieveinCatholicEd

Adriana LaGrange @AdrianaLaGrange · Aug 31

This week, schools across Alberta are opening their doors to thousands of students and staff as they start the 2020-21 school year. While many students will be in class, some will be learning from home. #abed #ableg 1/6

Show this thread



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Sep 3

Together we "offer our humble petition to God for the safe return and well-being to our children, educators and staff, and the well being of their families." #IBelieveinCatholicEd @GrACE4cathed



Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary @calgarydiocese · Sep 3

Pope Francis: "Today we hear the voice of creation admonishing us to return to our rightful place in the natural created order – to remember that we are part of this interconnected web of life, not its masters. #SeasonOfCreation"

CCSTA @CCSTAconnect · Aug 24

#CanadianSchools: we'd love for you to put a #TooniesforTuition fundraiser onto your school calendar. And remember the trophy is once again up for grabs! @CatholicEdu @SkCSBA @ACSTANews



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 3

Our #IBelieveinCatholicEd teachers have been working tirelessly ensuring the safety and well being of our most precious students. May they be blessed with continued courage, good health, and abundant hope. They are the heroes of education who are the visible face of Christ.

GrACE @GrACE4cathed · Oct 2

Catholic school advocates would like to thank teachers for giving, sacrificing and having the heart of Jesus. On Oct. 5, World Teacher Day thank a teacher! #IBelieveinCatholicEd

ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 5

As a province who has one of the best educational systems in the world, let us join in celebrating our teachers; the everyday heroes who teach well beyond the curriculum. During challenging times, they remain committed to excellence and safety of our most precious students.

Adriana LaGrange @AdrianaLaGrange · Oct 5

Today is World Teachers' Day – a time to recognize teachers for the incredible work they do for students each day. Their dedication and care for their students has been highlighted for Albertans more than ever this year. #abed #ableg 1/4

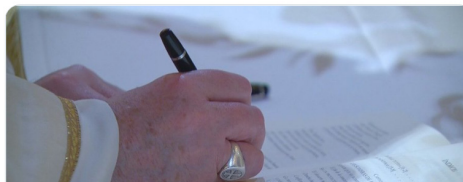
ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 9

Especially during challenging times, it is important to reflect on our many blessings. This Thanksgiving in particular, on behalf of Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association, we extend our deepest gratitude for the selfless work of all those who serve #IBelieveinCatholicEd.



Vatican News @VaticanNews · Oct 4

#Fraternity and social friendship are the ways the Pontiff indicates to build a better, more just and #peaceful world, with the contribution of all: people and institutions. With an emphatic confirmation of a 'no' to #war and to globalized #indifference.



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Aug 26
#IBelieveinCatholicEd

Evergreen Catholic Schools @EvergreenCCSD · Aug 26

With our sister division, @FMCS, and all Catholic school divisions in Alberta, we will be praying for a safe return to school. #ccssdLOVE twitter.com/FMCS/status/1...

Lakeland Catholic School Division @LCSD_150 · Aug 31

@LCSD_150 is proud to announce that Katelynne Ringuette won the 2020 Edwin Parr Teacher Award. Katelynne is going into her second year of teaching at @ENDHS_Wildcats in Bonnyville. She is also a proud alumna of Lakeland Catholic.

FrancoSud @CSFrancoSud · Jun 11
MISE À JOUR RENTRÉE 2020

La ministre de l'Éducation, Mme LaGrange, a tenue hier une conférence de presse au sujet de la rentrée scolaire de septembre prochain.

Suivez le lien suivant pour avoir plus de détails : francosud.ca/nouvelles/mess...



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Sep 11

"Our schools are deeply faith-filled, our teachers are models of the faith; our parishes are the backbone of our faith communities." Thank you @LynnAKJ for your dedicated service to #IBelieveinCatholicEd



Grandin Media | Alberta Catholic News @grandinmedia · Sep 22

The #SignOfHope campaign launched this morning for @cssalberta at @FairmontMAC. Their fundraising goal this year is to raise \$2 million by December 31 to meet the rising demand for services. #yeg #yeggives



Social Media ACSTA



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 17

Well said @EvergreenMike. During challenging times such as these we rely on the strength of our faith to give us hope. Sometimes as the song say "we walk by faith and not by sight." #IBelieveinCatholicEd @GrACE4cathed @grandinmedia

GrACE @GrACE4cathed · Oct 18

Join us in prayer for Catholic Education. #IBelieveinCatholicEd

Mike Paonessa @EvergreenMike · Oct 16

@EvergreenCSSD will celebrate the gift of publically funded catholic education on Sunday November 8. Grateful to our clergy and deacons in all our parishes, and @archedmonton for the wonderful support. pic.twitter.com/XzYPxahRrX

ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 22

Looking for materials to support Catholic Education Sunday celebrated on November 8th? Please check out our website by following this link! #IBelieveinCatholicEd @GrACE4cathed

Troy Davies @troydaves72 · Oct 20

So thankful for the leadership & partnership of Superintendent @shawhaggarty & @EICSCatholic school division for joining @cssalberta in our work to provide safety, stability and support to women & children fleeing #domesticviolence

ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 28

@archsmith @archedmonton shares his message for #IBelieveinCatholicEd Sunday celebrated Nov. 8. It is one of hope, love, and gratitude reminding us God's love is always constant and close. Thank you to all who serve in the faith.



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Oct 24

Tony Sykora was a champion of #IBelieveinCatholicEd. A heart of gold and a true servant of the Lord. His service as President of @ACSTANews resonates as legendary. Rest In Peace our dear friend.



Archbishop Smith's Message for Catholic Education ... Archbishop Smith's Message for Catholic Education Sunday 2020. Catholic Education Sunday this year is ...

youtube.com Congratulation to all... #IBelieveinCatholicEd



Michelle Lamer @lamer_mlamer22 · Oct 17

Virtual Awards held Oct. 8, excellence in Catholic Education! Congrats to all students & the special people who sponsor & support. @CTKChargers @STARCatholic ctk.starcatholic.ab.ca

CCSTA @CCSTAconnect · Oct 24

On #braincancerawareness Day, we remember Tony Sykora, with fondness and appreciation, for his commitment to Catholic Education in Canada @ACSTANews #catholiceducation #thankyou

FMCSO @FMCSO · Nov 8

Today is Catholic Education Sunday!

Red Deer Catholic @rdcrs · Nov 4

Are you or your child(ren) enrolled in our at-home learning program? Please share with us your at-home learning experience through photos, videos, and/or memes using the hashtag #rdcrsat-home. rdcrs.ca/programs/at-ho...

ACSTA @ACSTANews · Nov 18

Grateful to the Bishops of @archedmonton, @calgarydiocese, @EdmontonEparchy, Diocese of St. Paul, Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, and Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith for their wisdom, support, and prayers at this past weekend's Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association AGM.



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Nov 2

"As a Catholic educator, we can offer that hope to us. We can say 'You know, God doesn't waver' so while things can change, God's love for us doesn't change. And that's always going to remain a constant." #IBelieveinCatholicEd #CatholicEducationSunday

Lisa Turchansky @lisa_turchansky · Nov 8

Today is Catholic Education Sunday. We are grateful to live our faith everyday. Thanks to our families that choose a strong Catholic education and for our staff who teach it every day. Your example of grace during this time is why @EdmCathSchools is so strong! #ecsdfaithinspires

ACSTA @ACSTANews · Nov 14

Our gratitude to @AdrianaLaGrange for attending our virtual AGM. We continue to work together to ensure all students in #Alberta receive a world class education. Parents choose to send their children to #IBelieveinCatholicEd schools because they want a faith based education.

Adriana LaGrange @AdrianaLaGrange · Nov 14

I was pleased to join @ACSTANews for their virtual AGM this afternoon. Thanks for having me! #abed #ableg

ACSTA @ACSTANews · Nov 16

Special thanks to @Joan_Hertz for facilitating @ACSTANews panel discussion with Bishop McGrattan @calgarydiocese, @troydaves72 CEO of @cssalberta, Patrick Dumelle CEO of @CovenantCA, and @SWFlynn2 Interim President of @SJCuoFA on Catholic governance. #IBelieveinCatholicEd



We are grateful for our Catholic Schools. We invite you to join us in

Terry Harris @terryharris · Nov 15

It was a privilege to work with fellow Trustees from @EdmCathSchools & across AB, at Saturday's @ACSTANews virtual AGM, enhancing governance of Catholic education for the benefit of our students & community. Thanks @archsmith, Bishop David & Minister @AdrianaLaGrange. #abed

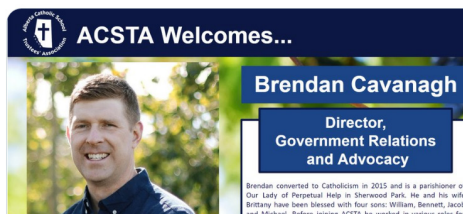
ACSTA @ACSTANews · Nov 16

Special thanks to all those who attended @ACSTANews first ever virtual AGM. Advocating for publicly funded #IBelieveinCatholicEd an important priority to ensure students receive quality education permeated with faith and rooted in Christ.



ACSTA @ACSTANews · Nov 24

We just added a new team member! Welcome, Brendan!



2020 ACSTA AGM - Saturday, November 14th Panel Discussion (Afternoon Session)



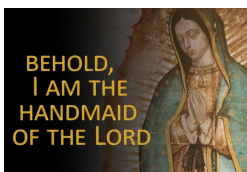
ACSTA @ACSTANews

As part of our continued collaboration and work with @CCSSAB we would like to thank President @rhondalinton and Executive Director @Mike_Hauptman for their participation at our AGM. #IBelieveinCatholicEd Superintendents demonstrate exemplary leadership and commitment

Adriana LaGrange @AdrianaLaGrange · Nov 24

Alberta's government has introduced a series of new COVID-19 measures. As part of these new measures, all Grades 7 to 12 students in Alberta will move to at-home learning effective Nov 30. alberta.ca/release.cfm?x1... 1/5 #abed #ableg

Show this thread



Honorary Life Membership



late Joan Carr
Nominated by: Edmonton CSSD



David Keohane
Nominated by: Greater St. Albert RCSSD



Gray Strother
Nominated by: Calgary RCSSD

Appreciation



Michelle Collett
Nominated by: ACSTA Board of Directors



Rose Kostiuk
Nominated by: St. Thomas Aquinas RCSSD



Judy Look
Nominated by: Calgary RCSSD



Caroline Maillet-Rao
Nominated by: Conseil scolaire Francosud,
Conseil scolaire Centre-Est, Conseil scolaire
Centre-Nord, Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest



Deb and Tom Mauro
Nominated by: Calgary RCSSD



Marlene Pelletier
Nominated by: Greater St. Albert RCSSD



Dean Sarnecki
Nominated by: ACSTA Board of Directors



Serafino Scarpino
Nominated by: Calgary RCSSD

St. Thomas More



Robert Yaro
Fort McMurray RCSSD



John Williams
Catholic Education Association of Yukon

Faithful Steward Long Service - 10 Years



Margaret Borders
Lakeland RCSSD



Bryan Kranzler
Holy Spirit RCSSD



Dick Mastel
Medicine Hat RCSSD



Noreen Radford
Greater St. Albert RCSSD

Faithful Steward Long Service - 15 Years



Ken Tratch
Holy Spirit RCSSD



Kelly Whalen
Holy Family CSSD

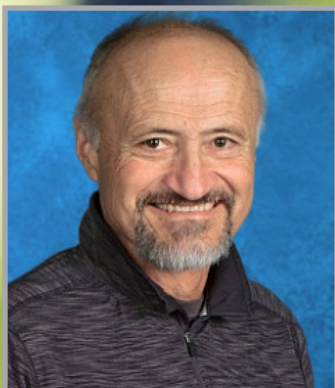


Richard Yaceyko
Evergreen CSSD

Faithful Steward Long Service - 25 Years



Ron McKay
Evergreen CSSD



Ron Schreiber
Christ the Redeemer CSSD

Certificate in Catholic School Trusteeship



Jennifer Adams-Hessel
Grande Prairie RCSSD



Michelle Boisvert
Grande Prairie RCSSD

Those who **hope**
in the **LORD**
will **renew** their strength
Isaiah 40:31

Justice Feehan Catholic Education Scholarship



Elizabeth Lema
St. Joseph's College



大成 DENTONS

Hello! My name is Elizabeth Lema and I am currently in my fourth year of Education at the University of Alberta. I was raised in the Catholic faith with a firm belief system. My top priority has always been to live out my faith and to be an example to others in faith through my everyday actions. I believe that living with God's love is leading a life that is honest, moral, and joyful. I have always had and continue to have a strong desire to help children become who God created them to be through the ministry of teaching and education.

During my second year of Education, I was having some doubts about the vocation I had originally felt called to, and in conversation with a priest, it was recommended to me that I spend more time with children in a learning environment. So in June of 2019, I had the extraordinary privilege of going to Port-au-Prince, Haiti to volunteer with a group of Religious Sisters in schools and catechism centres in the slums of the city for two weeks. I wasn't able to speak to the children because of the language barriers, but we were able to form relationships with each other through our common faith. Even though the children I met were all living or formerly living in extreme poverty, I could see the light of Christ persistently shining through each of them. Because I couldn't speak to the children, I thought I wouldn't be able to do much, but I quickly discovered that there is so much more to teaching than just through words. Although I went to Haiti to help the Sisters enrich the lives of the children they serve, I left realizing that they enriched my life in a more profound way than I could have ever imagined. I never knew that people with so little could give me so much.

Through my experience in attending Catholic schools, I have found that my life has been enhanced through a system that ties faith into all aspects of the curriculum and school life. I believe that the Catholic School System is a blessing to all students, as it creates an environment of faith that some students might not have elsewhere. I look forward to someday contributing to the Edmonton Catholic School System as a teacher, and hope that my love of Christ may be spread to all those I encounter in my career.

Justice Feehan Catholic Education Scholarship

My name is Natalie Harland and I am a second year Bachelor of Education student at St. Mary's University in Calgary, Alberta. During my formative school years, I was blessed with the opportunity to experience both the public and Catholic school systems in my city. Through the public system, I had some remarkable teachers and I have a lot of positive memories. When it came time to attend high school, I felt my designated public school was unlikely to provide me with a strong sense of community. My best friend was moving to Texas and my other friends were designated to attend different high schools. I wanted to find a school where I could make lifelong friendships. At the time, a friend from my soccer team suggested going to a Catholic high school with her, so I decided to explore the idea. The school was much further away and I only knew a few people that were going to be attending. I was scared of being alone and not fitting in.

When my mother and I arrived at the school's open house, I remember instantly feeling like I could picture myself there. The principal was very kind and really expressed how happy he would be to have me attend. I felt so welcomed by a man that had only met me for a few minutes. That day we signed the papers to transfer schools (and the rest is history?). At this school I definitely found that sense of community I was looking for. I was able to play volleyball all three years, make a group of lifelong friends, and have rewarding connections with my teachers. Even though it was scary and took some time to make strong relationships, it was worth the struggle. I am



Natalie Harland
St. Mary's University



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grateful for the Catholic school system and for the many positive experiences I had.

Upon graduation and throughout my first degree at the University of Calgary, I was considering the idea of becoming a baptized Catholic. Although I felt like I was a part of the Catholic community, I had not been formally baptized. I would pray to God when I needed guidance or when I was in crisis, without really understanding the teachings of the Church. I believed in God, yet I did not know or understand very much about him. It was a confusing time for me so I started looking into doing the RCIA program to help me through. Becoming a baptized Catholic was not as simple as I had assumed. It consisted of night classes for over 8 months, homework and readings. I pushed off doing RCIA for years because I always told myself I was too busy. It was not until last year when I found St. Bernard's church and Father Cristino that I made the commitment.

I went to St. Bernard's church for a meeting about possibly joining RCIA. After a great conversation with the RCIA director, I let him know if I could work it into my schedule. He responded by telling me that there is never going to be a perfect time to do this and that I am never going to find the time unless I make the time. I was embarrassed because he was right. I was putting it off because I knew it would be hard work and not always convenient. I went home and thought about what he said, and decided that it was time to make the commitment. Through attending RCIA, I learned about the teachings of the church and what it means to be Catholic. A lot of what I learned resonated with me, but I still grappled with some of the concepts. My journey into the Catholic faith is new and there is still a lot to learn. Father Cristino and the RCIA director, Todd, have been by my side since the beginning. They challenged me to look inside myself and think about what I truly value in life. They have not sugar coated the experience for me; they told me it would be hard and confusing and it has been. Facing my own fears and recognizing my own worth has been difficult and will continue to be difficult, but I can honestly say that I feel like a better person because of it. I was baptized this spring with my sponsor, my beautiful grandmother, by my side.

Trying to place God in the center of my life has made me a more empathetic and understanding person. It has also shown me that as a teacher, I want my students to feel the sense of community and connection that I have felt within the church. I want my students to grow up to be compassionate people who care about themselves and others. I want my students to feel loved by God and to love him back. These are all values that I can instill in my students by giving them a Catholic education. I am excited to be a part of so many children's lives and their path to finding faith. I am blessed and honoured to have received the Justice Kevin Feehan Scholarship, and am looking forward to my journey as a Catholic teacher.



Book Reviews

Compiled by: *Eugenia Kowalczyk, Ph.D., Executive Director, ACSTA*

Brendan Cavanagh, Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, ACSTA

A few book selections for winter reading:

THE SIX SECRETS OF CHANGE



What the Best Leaders Do to Help Their Organizations **Survive** and **Thrive**

MICHAEL FULLAN

Author of Change Leader & Leading in a Culture of Change

The Six Secrets of Change: *What the Best Leaders do to help Their Organizations Survive and Thrive:* In this book, Fullan explores essential lessons for business and public sector leaders for surviving and thriving in today's complex environment. He draws on his acclaimed work in bringing about large-scale and substantial change in education reform in both public school systems and universities, as well as engaging in major change initiatives internationally.

The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools:

Five Essential Marks of Catholic Schools by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, former Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, faithfully summarizes the last fifty years of Magisterial documents on Catholic schools, and should serve as an inspiration and guidance for all who labor for the cause of Catholic education.

The Holy See's
TEACHING
on
CATHOLIC
SCHOOLS

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB
SECRETARY, CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

The Case for Catholic Education: Why Parents, Teachers, and Politicians Should Reclaim the Principles of Catholic Pedagogy:

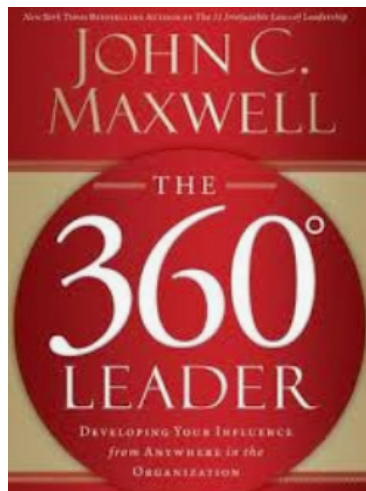
With penetrating insights, pointed anecdotes, and drawing upon recent empirical studies and Church documents, Ryan Topping describes the near collapse of Catholic education in North America and uncovers the enduring principles of authentic renewal.

The Case for Catholic Education
Why Parents, Teachers, and Politicians Should Reclaim the Principles of Catholic Pedagogy

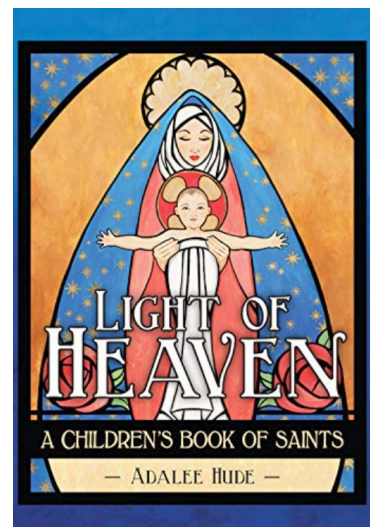


RYAN N. S. TOPPING

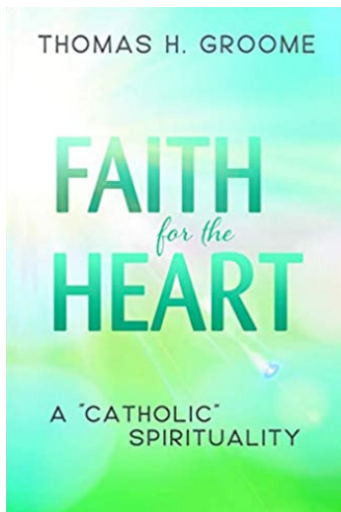
Light of Heaven *A Children's Book of Saints:* A beautiful way to introduce children to beloved saints. Created by artist Adalee Hude.



The 360 Degree Leader: *Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization:* Learn how to lead with maximum impact, regardless of your position, through this masterclass distillation of John C. Maxwell's thirty years of experience teaching people how to make a significant difference in their organizations.

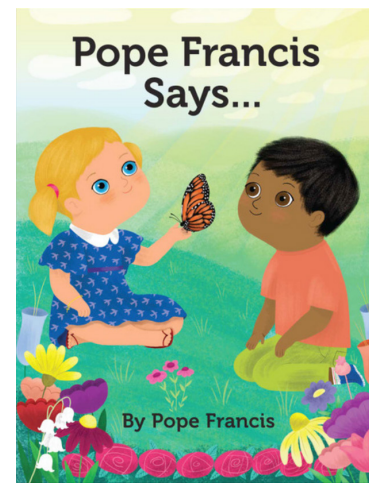


Faith for the Heart: A "catholic" Spirituality: Thomas Groome invites the reader to enter more deeply into the rich treasury of the spiritual resources of the Church's faith, practice, and traditions.



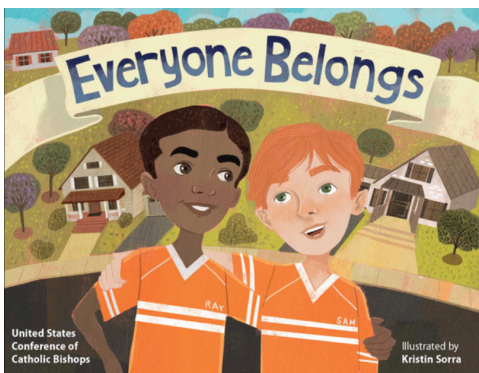
Our hunger for God draws us to community in church. The author reflects on some of the human heart's deepest longings: for fullness, for love, for happiness and a reliable way to achieve it, for freedom, and for a wholesome holiness of life toward authenticity as human beings.

Pope Francis Says...: shows children how to live as Christians and know they are loved by God. The Holy Father provides concrete examples for children to follow that will instill feelings of confidence, joy, and love.



Everyone Belongs:

Inspired by the USCCB's statement "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love, A Pastoral Letter Against Racism," and created in collaboration with Loyola Press, *Everyone Belongs*, empowers young readers to reflect on the reality of racism in our society, to see it through the lens of history and faith, and act towards respect, understanding, and friendship.



THE HERO FACTOR

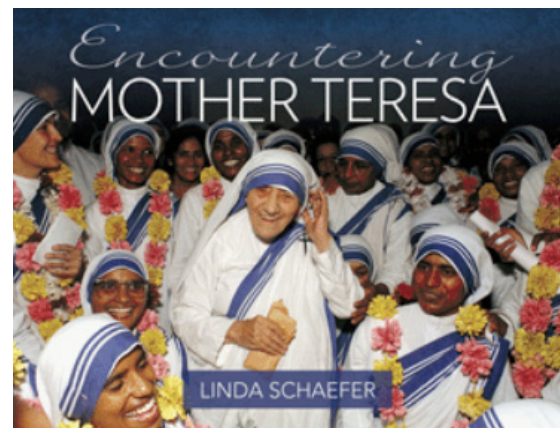
HOW GREAT LEADERS
TRANSFORM ORGANIZATIONS
AND CREATE
WINNING CULTURES

JEFFREY HAYZLETT
WITH JIM EBER

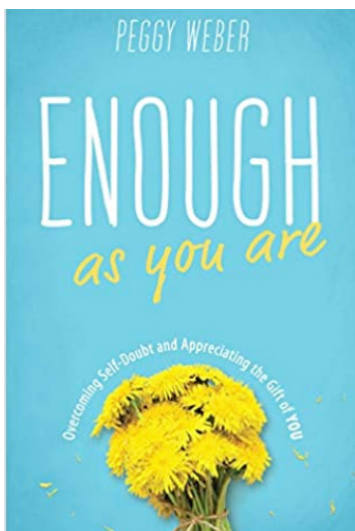
The Hero Factor: *How Great Leaders Transform Organizations and Create Winning Cultures:* It's not profit over people that will make your business successful - it's when you combine people and profits that you become A HERO LEADER. Today's leaders need to engage, connect with, listen to and include their employees and customers in the

conversation surrounding the business. The *Hero Factor* discusses the importance of a strong company culture as the backbone of any successful business. Companies with leadership that dismisses the importance of transparency in today's world are more likely to be called out for not living up to the mission statements on their websites.

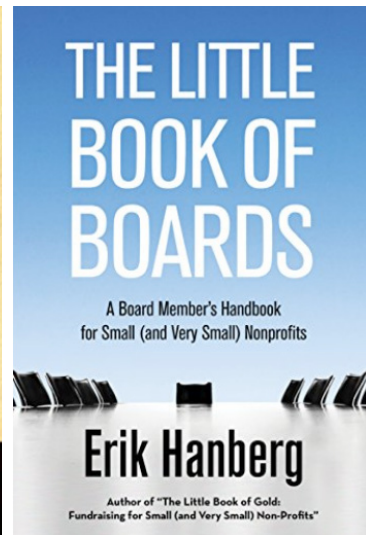
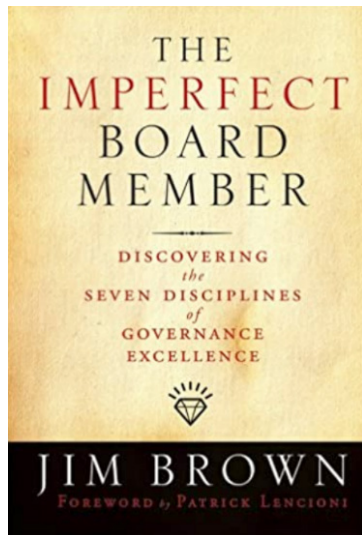
Encountering Mother Teresa: This fascinating book includes journalist Linda Schaefer's interviews with six of Mother Teresa's closest friends, confidants, plus over 200 rare and never-before-seen photos of Mother Teresa and the Missionaries of Charity. Spanning decades, these photos provide you an up-close and personal look at Mother Teresa and her enduring legacy.



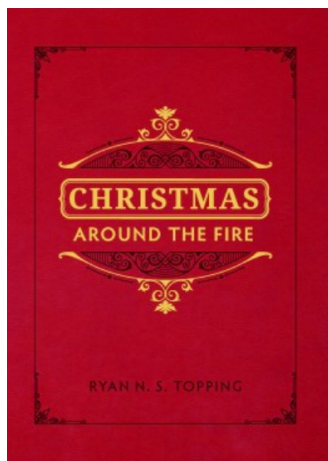
Enough as You Are: Overcoming Self-Doubt and Appreciating the Gift of You: Peggy Weber shares her experiences of doubting herself and discovering that she is enough; that we all are enough for God's love. Each chapter includes anecdotes and life lessons for readers, as well as some "Sainly Inspiration" to help us continue recognizing that we are enough. Each chapter also includes a guided Examen and practical ways to put this discovered truth of value into practice.



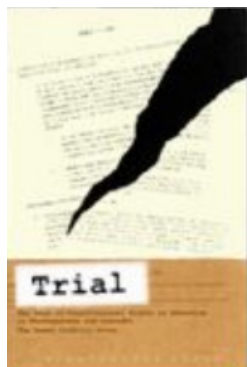
The Little Book of Boards: *A Board Member's Handbook for Small Nonprofits* by Erik Hanberg and **The Imperfect Board Member:** *Discovering the Seven Disciplines of Governance Excellence* by Jim Brown, are both highly perceptive,



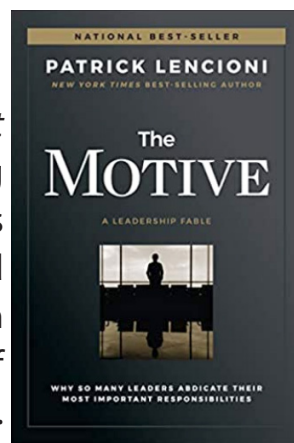
eminently readable, engagingly human book on how boards and directors can improve their performance in both corporate and not-for-profit governance.



Christmas Around the Fire: Stories, Essays, & Poems for the Season of Christ's Birth: Christmas is a time for celebrating the birth of Jesus with family and friends, to gather together in sacred and jovial celebration of the Incarnation. *In Christmas Around the Fire*, Ryan Topping invites us to turn off the television set, put down the device, quiet ourselves, and gather our loved ones to enjoy some of the best writing, in a variety of forms, about Christmas.



The Motive: *Why So Many Leaders Abdicate Their Most Important Responsibilities:* New York Times best-selling author Patrick Lencioni has written a dozen books that focus on how leaders can build teams and lead organizations. In *The Motive*, he shifts his attention toward helping them understand the importance of why they're leading in the first place.







The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John: 1:14

On behalf of the
Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association
wishing you and your family
many wonderful blessings
this Christmas and throughout the new year.


Serena Shaw
President




Dr. Eugenia Kowalczyk
Executive Director