

The Catholic Bishops  
of Alberta and the  
Northwest Territories

Les évêques catholiques  
de l'Alberta et des  
Territoires du Nord-Ouest

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October 11, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

*As for us, we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. Micah 4:5*

Publicly funded Catholic education is a gift to be embraced with gratitude. As citizens in one of only three provinces and two territories with publicly funded Catholic education, we need to recognize the blessing, responsibility, and opportunity we have been afforded to lead our young people to Jesus Christ and form them in the faith of his Church. Within an increasingly secularistic society, parents are seeking a genuine Catholic education for their children. They entrust them to the educators, trustees, clergy and Catholic community, in the expectation that all will collaborate effectively to ensure that our young people encounter the love of God revealed in Christ. Let us all joyfully accept this challenge!

The theme for Catholic education 2022-2023 is "Walking Together in Catholic Education". One year ago, our Holy Father called the faithful to experience a synodal process of communal listening, dialogue and discernment in relation to the mission of the Church. He described this as an invitation to the People of God to "walk together in faith". In 2022, the Holy Father modelled the synodal experience when he welcomed Inuit, First Nations, and Métis delegates to the Vatican. Then, in his recent penitential pilgrimage to our nation, Pope Francis *walked with us* on the journey towards truth and reconciliation.

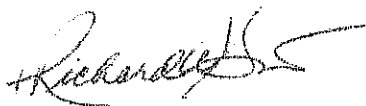
Throughout the synodal process in our respective dioceses, we heard again and again that the People of God are concerned for our children and families. As essential participants in the mission of the Church, Catholic schools have a vital role to play in providing opportunities for our students to encounter Jesus and walk with him. This "walking together" requires listening and dialogue. Yet, as Pope Francis has said, "We cannot create a culture of dialogue if we do not have identity." (2) To fulfill their mission effectively, therefore, our schools must clearly understand Catholic identity and embrace it fully.

Furthermore, our theme, Walking Together in Catholic Education, gives expression to our solidarity and unity in the service of our young people. On the occasion of Catholic Education Sunday, we, the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, wish to acknowledge with deep gratitude the "workers in the vineyards" of Catholic education. Parents, you are the first and primary teachers of your children. Thank you for your faithfulness and for choosing and supporting Catholic education. Teachers, the influence of your witness is beyond measure. By choosing to be a Catholic educator you have responded to a missionary vocation. Thank you. Clergy and parishioners, your prayers, support and active engagement with Catholic schools are evidence of our unity and commitment to young people. Thank you. To those in leadership roles, the decisions you make and the unity you model aim to foster within our schools a culture of faith in Christ and fidelity to his Word. Be assured of our readiness to support you in this heavy yet beautiful responsibility.

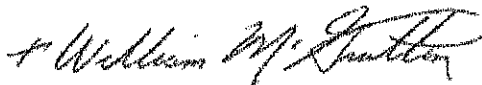
Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, is an occasion for prayer, reflection and solidarity, as we acknowledge Catholic Education Sunday in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. As we gather in Eucharistic celebration in our parishes, let us offer prayers of thanksgiving for the gift of Catholic schools, together with petitions for the beloved young people entrusted to our care.

May God bless our Catholic schools.

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



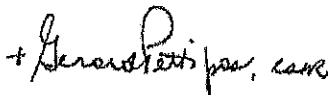
Most Reverend Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton



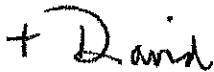
Most Reverend William McGrattan  
Bishop of Calgary



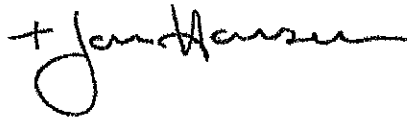
Most Reverend Paul Terrio  
Bishop of St. Paul



Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR  
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan



Most Reverend David Motiuk  
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of  
Edmonton



Most Reverend Jon Hansen, CSsR  
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith