



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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Catholic Education Week 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Catholic Education Week celebrates the witness and mission of our Catholic schools in the province of Alberta. The theme this year is *United in Prayer and Grateful for Catholic Schools*.

None of us could have foreseen that this 2020 Catholic Education Week would be taking place in the midst of a pandemic which continues to impact our homes, parishes, and schools. At his Easter address Pope Francis said, “This is not a time for indifference because the whole world is suffering and needs to be united in facing the pandemic. ... It is more urgent than ever that all recognize themselves as part of a single family and support one another.” This Catholic Education Week unites us as one “educational family” confident and committed to Catholic Education in the support we experience through one another, parents and children, educators, trustees, clergy, and the faithful.

As a “single family of faith”, we join in prayer – first in thanksgiving for the gift of Catholic Education and secondly in recognition of the great needs of humanity at this time in our local communities and across the world. It is a time when the solitude of self-isolation in our homes provides each of us with the opportunity to pray. The Week of Catholic Education includes a focus upon prayer beginning on Tuesday with the Holy Rosary; Wednesday the Chaplet of Divine Mercy; Thursday with Mass and on Friday a concluding Prayer Blessing.

During this week, let us also remember especially in our prayers those who provide frontline healthcare, the workers in our communities, those suffering with COVID-19, those who have died from the illness, and all those who have been impacted.

We are grateful to our Catholic educators who are exploring various ways to reach out to the students at home through online connections. Academic work is being completed but more importantly in these challenging times the commitment of our Catholic teachers to their vocation of teaching is most evident. The learning and experience of faith also continues through the digital religious curriculum *Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ*. The efforts of trustees, superintendents, teachers and staff to embrace and

optimize modes of learning through technology, to connect with students, and to ensure their well-being is greatly appreciated. We thank you for this dedication to the students and their families.

In these extraordinary times, the Bishops of Alberta also thank the parents for their promotion of Catholic education. We thank you for helping your children to learn at home and we know that this mode of learning during the pandemic is new for many of you. We offer you our encouragement as the first educators of your children and our support, knowing that you have many demands upon your time and are greatly concerned for the future of your families.

To the community of faithful, we acknowledge the unprecedented efforts of collaboration that we have witnessed to combat and curtail this pandemic in our province. Many of you are involved professionally or as community leaders in the care of the vulnerable and in maintaining essential services. As we emerge eventually from the pandemic, may we be attentive to the grateful lessons learned, especially pertaining to the beauty and dignity of each human life, the centrality of family, and our shared responsibility for the common good, particularly as this relates to promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of one another.

May all of these efforts unite us in prayer and strengthen us in our ongoing commitment to Catholic education. We extend to our Catholic school communities our grateful prayers and blessings in celebrating this “virtual” 2020 Alberta Catholic Education Week.

Yours in Christ,

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



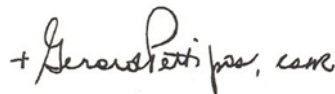
Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton



Most Reverend William McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary



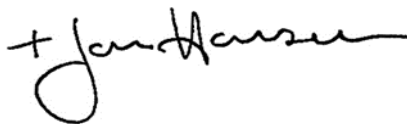
Most Reverend Paul Terrio
Bishop of St. Paul



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