



## Stars of Faith: Our Catholic Schools

*When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. – Matthew 2:10*

As 2022 dawns, the grateful advocates for Catholic education resume our mission to inspire, invigorate and embolden the spirit of Catholic education in order to unite, engage, educate and communicate with one voice on its behalf. As quality learning tops the list and priorities of health and safety take our attention, we continue to respond as a community of faith knowing that God’s plans for us are more perfect than we can imagine. Thank you to all committed to Christ-centered learning. Thank you for being a star for others; especially your students and their families. Let us continue to celebrate the reason for our existence and focus on the light of Catholic education.

For each one of you, we are most grateful!

Bonnie Annicchiarico,  
GrACE Director



Lakeland Catholic Schools

## Book Your Calendar

Catholic Education Week 2022

May 23-27, 2022

Theme: *Rebuild, Restore, Renew Together*



## GrACE invites YOUR Catholic school to be a light; be a star.

Share your ideas, prayers and stories to light the way for others, especially through these challenging times.

- † Tell us how “the Lord shines upon you.”
- † In what ways is your school leading and responding in faith?
- † Where do you see hope?
- † What encouragement through Christ can you offer to others?

Post on social media. Take pictures. Email [gracedirector7@gmail.com](mailto:gracedirector7@gmail.com) with updates for the February GrACE newsletter. Deadline is February 14.

**The mission of GrACE is to inspire, invigorate and embolden the spirit of Catholic education in order to unite, engage, educate and communicate with one voice on its behalf.**

## GrACE Newsletter

GrACE newsletter seeks to build a provincial Catholic community by celebrating Catholic education across Alberta.

## Messages for 2022

GrACE is led and supported by Alberta's Bishops, Alberta Catholic Schools' Trustees and the Council of Catholic School Superintendents. Enjoy their messages of encouragement and hope for 2022.

### Archbishop Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R. Archbishop of Grouard–McLennan

Happy New Year! I wish you that, but more particularly, I wish you a Happy Epiphany! And it's really about Epiphany that I want to say a few things today.

You know, it's not only COVID and its effects—it's other circumstances and realities that challenge us each day to be the positive and encouraging people that we know ourselves truly to be. These can seem like dark days, and lately very cold days as well! In the face of that, I want to share with you some Good News that the feast of the Epiphany holds for me, especially thanks to a message from St. Leo the Great.

St. Leo the Great was pope from 440-461 – a long time ago. Reflecting on the event of the Epiphany – the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus in the manger – Pope Leo had this to say: "... the star beckoned the three wise men out of their distant country and led them to recognize and adore the King of heaven and earth. The obedience of the star calls us to imitate its humble service: to be servants, as best we can, of the grace that invites everyone to find Christ. Dear friends, you must have the same zeal to be of help to one another; then, in the kingdom of God, to which faith and good works are the way, you will shine as children of the light ..."

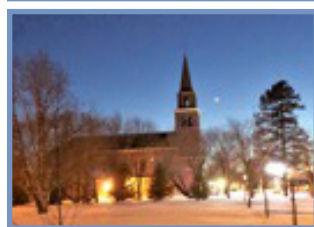
The star of Bethlehem led the wise men to Jesus. The star helped them find their way in the darkness. The star wasn't the magi's goal; their goal was to find Jesus! But the star lit the way through the darkness. St. Leo is suggesting that we are like that star. Our goal in this time and place is to help others to find Jesus, the One who lifts us up and loves us. Strangely enough, except for our star, the sun, stars are only seen when it is very dark around us. We cannot see them at all when it is daylight. Only in the dark. When many seem lost and confused, we are called upon to lead them to the true Light, Jesus Christ. We carry that same light in our hearts, and by our words and actions we can lead others to Jesus. What an encouraging way to understand what we are to do – and be – in this time and place.

I wish you and the whole GrACE family many blessings as we journey into 2022. May we find light for our own path, and light and joy for everyone we meet along the way. May you be blessed throughout 2022.



### Most Reverend Paul Terrio Bishop of St. Paul

After very cold weather over Christmas and New Year, to say nothing of all the challenges of the pandemic, our schools are bravely back in operation with all the hope that the faith of young people can bring. This trust in our Lord was evoked by the growing light of the night sky above our cathedral a few days ago as the extreme cold softened with promise of better days to come! May hope and trust in our Lord grow in all of our Catholic school students, teachers and staff as we journey into 2022 with the Light of Christ in our hearts!



## #gottagracegroup2.22

GrACE is ready to rebuild, restore and renew together in 2022! With new leaders and stakeholders advocating for Catholic education, we invite you to take an updated photo of your "new" GrACE group, share it and post it at [#gottagracegroup2.22](https://www.instagram.com/gottagracegroup2.22)

Our first submission: CTR GrACE 2.22



## Catholic Education Prayers of the Faithful for February

For Catholic Education:

- † That our Catholic schools may be inspired by the example of the many great saints who have gone before them and who intercede for them, we pray to the Lord.
- † That our Catholic schools may inspire students to a life of love and service, we pray to the Lord.
- † That our Catholic schools may fill students with a love for learning and a desire to change the world for the better, we pray to the Lord.
- † That the teachers in our Catholic schools may be strengthened for their important task in our world, we pray to the Lord.

## Catholic School District's Publications

- † [Calgary Catholic School District](#)
- † [Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools](#)
- † [Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools](#)

**Charlie Bouchard**  
Superintendent, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Schools  
President, Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta

**Striving to Still the Storm**

In Matthew's Gospel, chapter 8, verses 23-27, we hear how Jesus and his disciples were crossing the sea. A sudden storm arose, causing waves so high that the boat began to take on water. Massive panic ensued amongst those on the boat, and the disciples became afraid for their lives. We are told how Jesus was sleeping at the time and had to be awoken. The disciples exclaimed 'Lord save us! We are Perishing!' Jesus responded saying 'Why are you afraid, you of little faith?'

Jesus may have rebuked the disciples for their weak faith, but he didn't abandon them or let them drown. Instead, He calmed the storm and then continued to teach them who He was and demonstrated what it was to trust in God.

The significance of Jesus calming the storm is pertinent to what is happening in our world today, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic. The waters in our lives are not exactly calm right now. Daily, many face uncertainty, fear, and even death. At the best of times, life has its inherent challenges and the pandemic has only added a layer.

Over the course of the last couple of years, and during this pandemic, we have all had different and varied experiences with COVID-19. Some people have contracted COVID and became quite ill, some had mild symptoms and still others continue to face COVID with long-haul symptoms. Unfortunately, there are many who have lost loved ones and for this I'm sorry. God Bless their souls.



**Most Reverend Richard W. Smith**  
Archbishop of Edmonton

Dear Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education,

We have just completed the Christmas season of our liturgical year, a time that celebrates among other things, the solemn feasts of our Lord's Birth,

the Holy Family, the Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord. Each of these celebrations gives us a particular insight into the light of Christ that breaks into the world, scattering the darkness of every age and giving hope to those in despair.

In the story of the Epiphany especially (Matthew 2:1-12), we learn how the wise men saw clearly because they had the light of a star. This star guided the wise men along their journey and then stopped over the place where Jesus was. Obviously, that is not how stars normally work. Something very much out of the ordinary is happening to alter the normal course of things. The extraordinary activity is that of God, leading the wise men to Jesus and, once they arrived, enabling them to see clearly. They did not see with unaided human vision; they saw with God's help. This teaches us that God, who reveals his Son to the world, wants people to see the revelation, and He acts to give the clear vision we need. The wise men were granted the light of a star. Our gift from God is the light of faith. In faith, we see with clear vision what God wants us to see: that Jesus is both God and man, given to us as Lord and Savior.

Why was Jesus sleeping on the boat? Was Jesus exhausted from his ministry and from continuous preaching and teaching to large crowds? Was he tired from continuously having people pull on his garments? It is likely that Jesus, in human form, was tired. Many of us are also tired and exhausted too. It is during these times, however, that we must rely and lean on our faith. The Lord will never abandon us!



As Catholics, and in Catholic education, we have the privilege and opportunity to share this very message and inspiration with the students we teach and with those we encounter, at work or in our personal lives. As Jesus stilled the storm, let us strive to still the storm in our lives and in the lives of others.

Like in the Gospel, let us hope our waters will soon become calm. Through prayer and trust in God, we know this will happen. We will get through this pandemic! By the light of our faith, we will persevere!

Thank you for all that you do to support and advocate for Catholic Education and for taking advantage of all opportunities to spread the good news. Great things are happening in our schools!

By God's grace, the star that appeared before the wise men, the star that now shines in the witness of the Church can now appear, through us, to those who do not yet know Christ and his Church, or who may simply be experiencing, especially in this time of pandemic, the darkness of this age without reference to Christ.

Our call as Grateful Advocates of Catholic Education is to demonstrate that the truth of the Gospel need not be feared; on the contrary it should be joyfully embraced. The wise men show us that this demonstration is given by the witness of worship and joy. Once they found Christ, they offered gifts and knelt down in worship and adoration. Here we see that worship, the act of self-surrender to Christ as God and King, is an act of surrender to the fullness of truth. As such, worship gives birth to joy.

So, then, throughout this new year, let us worship Christ with the whole gift of self, allow his joy to arise in our hearts, and make that joy visible to others. Then, by God's grace, the star that appeared to the wise men, the star that now shines in the witness of the Church, will begin to appear also to others, to lead them out of fearful self-reference toward the joyful embrace of God's truth revealed in His Son.

With the assurance of my prayers and best wishes for you all in 2022,

**Yours in Christ,**  
**Archbishop Richard Smith**

# Catholic Schools and the Synod

The Holy Father has called the People of God throughout the world to begin a journey of listening, dialoguing, praying and discerning together the way in which we carry forward the mission of the church. Catholic schools are a missionary arm of the Catholic Church and, as such, have a vital role to play in all aspects of this faith journey.

Check out [this great video](#) explaining the video from a young persons' perspective.

## How will YOU be a voice within the synod?

You are invited to join a synod listening/consultation group or to host one of your own within your school community. Can you be a catalyst for others to be involved as well? What about your staff, students or school councils can take part.

There are four dioceses in Alberta. To get involved in your diocese. Let your voice be heard.

- † [Synod on Synodality 2021 - caedm](#)
- † [Synod 2021-2023 - ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY \(catholicyc.ca\)](#)
- † [Synod 2023 - The Diocesan Phase | Catholic Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan \(archgm.ca\)](#)



“ a time to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands ~ Pope Francis.

## Telling Our Catholic Education Stories

- † [Because of Mr. Daniel - ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY \(catholicyc.ca\)](#)
- † [A gift to preserve - ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY \(catholicyc.ca\)](#)
- † [Holy moments in hard times - ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY \(catholicyc.ca\)](#)

## Connect Online

- † GrACE Facebook address is [www.facebook.com/GrACE4cathed](http://www.facebook.com/GrACE4cathed)
- † GrACE email is [gracedirector7@gmail.com](mailto:gracedirector7@gmail.com)
- † GrACE Twitter address is [@GrACE4cathed](https://twitter.com/GrACE4cathed)
- † [GrACE website](#)

## Catholic Education Around the Province St. Mary's School, Okotoks

Excerpt from “Holy Moments” by Brandon Bailey, Principal of St. Mary's School in Okotoks.



One of the activities that we had students participate in was a “Holy Moments” chain. Students would add their moments to the chain which was connected and displayed in the hallways.

We found that by intentionally sharing Holy Moments, perspectives changed. The act of re-framing situations to see the blessings in our midst allowed us to see our call to be joyful people, who act with gratitude. However, joyful participation in the challenges of life isn't always easy. By identifying Holy Moments, it has also affirmed the gift that we have in our Catholic school with faith in the Lord at all times. We walk with Jesus every day! It is a blessing to be able to journey through hard times together knowing that God calls us to lift one another up when we are down. When you stop and look for it, even on your hardest day there is a Holy Moment that will make you smile.

Full story in [Faithfully](#)

## École Notre Dame High School (Lakeland Catholic School Division)

### Blessing our classrooms

To begin 2022, NDHS continued an amazing tradition Sylvia Prefontaine had started years ago by blessing the classrooms. Not only were all of our classrooms, spaces, and entries blessed with Holy Water, but a prayer was said over our students by youth minister, Siobhan Squires. The rooms were silent as students listened respectfully or participated in the prayer within their hearts. The school as whole felt lighter following this practice showing that even in uncertain times, God continues to give us new beginnings and opportunities to make His presence known.



## Holy Spirit Catholic Schools

In Holy Spirit Catholic schools, we are guided in our actions by our three year faith plan - **Making Our Mark: Journey of an Intentional Disciple**. In this year, the final year of the plan, our theme is "Together on the Journey," with a focus on seeing our responsibility to our faith community and each other. As we continue to grow in seeing ourselves and each other as the Body of Christ, we know that we are responsible for translating Jesus from the ideal into the real for those around us. One of the ways that we can do this, and encourage others in Christ is through works of social justice that reflect our own hope in the Lord while showing that hope also to those who are marginalized. While so many works of social justice are ongoing in our school communities, the Christmas season illuminates how Catholic schools are little stars and marks of hope for those around them.

One long standing social justice project that serves our local communities in Holy Spirit is the Santa's Anonymous project. Having operated annually for over twenty years, the Santa's Anonymous group at Catholic Central High School focuses on the works of mercy in constructing food and gift hampers for families in need throughout the division. This year's project supported over fifty families during what can be for many a challenging season.

We also have schools that continue to work to support those in other areas of our world in partnership with Chalice. St. Patrick's Fine Arts Elementary and St. Teresa of Calcutta Elementary each engaged this Christmas season in fundraising to support their respective partner schools, Mateka Primary (Tanzania) and Mkono Wa Mara Primary (Tanzania). Ongoing support of these schools, amongst the many projects in our schools, connects our students to students elsewhere and helps them to understand the many blessings that they have in their own lives as well as their responsibility to help in providing hope to others.

One final example of social justice in Holy Spirit Catholic Schools was the work of the Social Justice Committee at St. Basil Catholic Education Centre. Over the Advent season, weekly challenges based on Matthew 25:35-40 encouraged staff members to bring in socks, mittens, toques, and food items that were assembled into over forty Blessing Bags that were distributed to the marginalized in Lethbridge through the SAGE Clan. Given the intense cold that prevailed throughout the Christmas season, we pray that these bags were a way in which the recipients could feel that the Lord was shining upon them, even for a brief time.

These stories are just a handful of examples of the ways in which our school communities are bringing our Faith Plan to life this year, walking together on a journey as intentional disciples, walking in the light of Christ.



## Elk Island Catholic Schools

### EICS surpasses goal and raises over \$15,000 for Lurana Shelter

A heartfelt thank-you to staff, students and families for your prayers, donations and fundraising efforts in support of the vulnerable women and children at the Lurana Shelter. Your donations will be used to create welcome baskets for families when they enter the shelter.



St. Martin's Catholic School in Vegreville had a visit from St. Nicholas



On Nov.18-20, a group of EICS students headed out for a retreat at Birch Bay to participate in the virtual Catholic conference for youth.



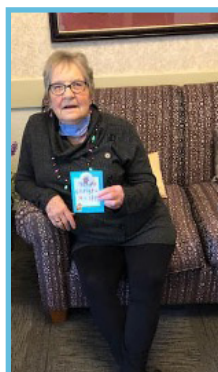
Holy Spirit's Virtual Advent concert to spread joy to our families.

## Grande Prairie Catholic Schools

### St. Catherine School



Delivering cards to local senior citizens



Staff donation advent calendar for families in need this holiday season

**St. Gerard School**



Donating Christmas gifts to children spending the holidays in the hospital



**Holy Cross**



Gifts for Mackenzie Place

**Mother Theresa Catholic School**



Cards for Seniors

**St. Kateri Catholic School**



**St. Mary School (Beaverlodge)**



Thank you to everyone who donated coins for the grade 1 coin drive! We will be donating our funds to the Beaverlodge Hospital Foundation



**St. Mary's School (Sexsmith)**



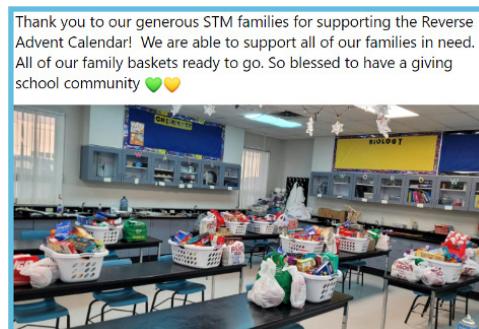
Food Bank Christmas Hamper Challenge

**St. Marie (Spirit River)**



We are the hands and feet of Christ. Yesterday the grades 5, 6, and 7 went to our local church and cleaned it thoroughly for our Christmas celebration.

**St. Thomas More (Fairview)**



Thank you to our generous STM families for supporting the Reverse Advent Calendar! We are able to support all of our families in need. All of our family baskets ready to go. So blessed to have a giving school community

**St. John Paul II**



Grade 9 students took place in marketplace, where they made and sold items- all proceeds went to charity.

## St. Joseph Catholic School

St. Joe's Rotary Interact Club presents a \$500 cheque to Candace Boyne with Pattison Media for the 98.9 Rewind Radio Stuff A Bus in support of The Salvation Army.



## Catholic Education Center



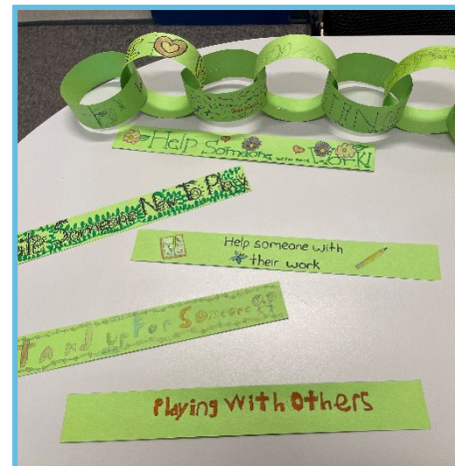
All our school families were gifted an ornament from GPCSD. The ornaments were printed on seed paper, which families were encouraged to plant for the Easter season.

## Calgary Catholic School District

### Celebration Chain

Students at Monsignor Doyle in Calgary Catholic School District, are creating a paper chain that will connect all the classrooms in our school. In this time of COVID when large gatherings are not able to happen, we at Monsignor Doyle are still connected with one another and support each other. We are focusing on the gifts that God has given each of us and how we can share our gifts. Students created "starter links" in a paper chain that stated ways that we can share our gifts (a picture is attached of a couple). These links were connected and hung near the classrooms.

When students are "caught" sharing their gifts they will receive a green paper link that they will print their name on. These "name links" will be added to the starter links already hung, and the goal is to connect all the classes together with God's gifts. Our message is that God loves all of us, we are all created in His image, and we are asked to treat each other with kindness and love. Spreading His love is contagious, and even if someone doesn't get caught, their sharing will hopefully help someone else share and that person will be caught and then the chain will grow. We are all in this community together and we are part of something special.



## A Prayer for our Schools in COVID

Please join us in praying for our schools during this challenging time of COVID.

[Click here for the prayer in Google Slides.](#)

## A Prayer for our Schools in Covid

Heavenly Father,  
 We pray for all the children, families, teachers and staff in our schools during this time of Covid. We are sick. We are weary. We are uncertain and sometimes afraid. We are worried for those we love and for the many in our community who are hurting. Be near us.  
 Protect your little ones, Lord. Bring them physical and mental health. Surround them with caregivers who see their needs and respond. Take away their fears. Calm their anxieties. Bring them the peace that only You can give. Draw them to you.  
 We pray for the learning needs of our students; for their recovery from the disruptions to education. May our students thrive and be challenged; may they seek wisdom and knowledge.  
 Loving God, look with compassion on the teachers, staff and families seeking your comfort and hope.  
 Lift up those who are exhausted.  
 Bring peace where there is disharmony and strife.  
 Bring hope to the hopeless.  
 Bless the suffering.  
 Father, we place our schools and our communities in your hands. We surrender it all to you.  
 Thank you for your love, your mercy and your compassion.  
 We make this prayer, through Christ our Lord. Amen

Mary, Mother of God, Pray for Us  
 St Joseph, Pray for Us





# Social Media from around the province...

**Holy Spirit School** @holyspirit\_CCSD - Jan 12  
 We celebrated our Epiphany Liturgy today - the whole school blessed our gathering spaces with the chalk blessed by Father Adrien - 20+C+M+B+22. May Christ bless our 'house' and all who enter!  
 @CCSD\_edu @GrACE4cathed #Epiphany



**PofPCCSD** @PofPccsd - Jan 10  
 All classroom doors were blessed today with chalk blessed by our parish priest. It represents the initials of the Magi-Caspar, Malchior and Balthazar who came to visit Jesus. Also is Latin for "May Christ bless the house". The + sign represent the cross and 20-22 the year.



**Medicine Hat Catholic Schools** @MHCatholic - Jan 11  
 Registration for the 2022-2023 school year opens on Tuesday, February 1!

"My child has never attended a faith-based school. What should I expect?" Click here to view our What to Expect in a Catholic School Q&A: [mhcb.e.ab.ca/religious-educ...](http://mhcb.e.ab.ca/religious-educ...)

"I love my Catholic school because I have the nicest teachers, and we get to learn about Jesus!"

- Harper, Grade 3



**Lakeland Catholic School Division** @LCSD\_150 - Jan 4  
 Two LCSD students will have their designs featured on blue shirts for Catholic Education Week.  
[lrcsd.ca/our-division/...](http://lrcsd.ca/our-division/)



**Bonnie-Lynne Boehm** @MrsBoehm - Jan 13

When kids notice the, "pink sky God made," you just have to take a moment to celebrate the beauty and the joy it brings. It's the little things. Pausing in the midst to notice is a beautiful reminder. ❤️ Kids are amazing! @EICSCatholic



**St. Alphonse School CCSD** @alphonusus\_st - Jan 6  
 Feast of the #Epiphany  
 January 6  
 #BelieveinCatholicED  
 #CatholicEducation  
 @CCSD\_edu

