



Blessings of the New Year

What does God have in store for Catholic education in this new year? Surrounded by God’s incredible love and emboldened by our faith let us “discover the epiphany of our God in everyone and every event, everywhere.”



Because you never know what’s going to happen next!

A survey was made among school children asking the question why they enjoyed reading Harry Potter novels and watching Harry Potter movies. The most common answer was, “Because you never know what’s going to happen next!” The same element of suspense and discovery marked the journey of the Magi, who never knew what road the Spirit was going to take them down next.



The magi-astrologers described in the Gospel had to be a little crazy leaving the security of their homeland to venture forth into a strange country presided over by a mad king like Herod, in search of a Divine child. But their great Faith, curiosity, and adventurous spirit enabled them to discover the secret of the whole universe – the secret of God’s incredible love for His people – because the Child they found was no ordinary child but the very Son of God become man. We are invited to have the curiosity of the school students and the Faith and adventurousness of the magi so that we may discover the “epiphany” of our God in everyone and every event, everywhere.

Adapted from Reflections for the feast of Epiphany – Vatican News

Welcome Bishop Franken to the GrACE Board 2023

At the last Alberta-NWT Bishops’ meeting, Bishop Terrio nominated his successor to replace him as an ABNWT bishop-representative on the GrACE board. His nomination was accepted and Bishop Franken did indeed agree to take on this responsibility.

The GrACE board and all grateful advocates across the province thank Bishop Terrio for his dedicated and foundational work establishing GrACE in Alberta. At the same time we welcome Bishop Franken to GrACE and welcome the gifts he will bring to our essential work.

Here is a story about the ordination: <https://caedm.ca/new-bishop-of-st-paul-answers-the-call/>



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.

GrACE Board 2023



Archbishop Richard Smith
Chair
Archdiocese of Edmonton, Bishops of Alberta-NWT



Dr. Bryan Szumlas
Vice-Chair
Chief Superintendent, Calgary Catholic School District (CCSSA)



Bishop Gary Franken
Diocese of St. Paul, Bishops of Alberta-NWT



Michael Ouellette
Trustee, Grande Prairie Catholic Schools (ACSTA)



Betty Turpin
Chief Superintendent, Holy Family Catholic Schools (CCSSA)



Vince MacDonald
Trustee, Lakeland Catholic School District (ACSTA)



Susanna Kaup
Secondary Curriculum Consultant of Religious Education, Edmonton Catholic Schools (REN)



Grant Gay
Director of Catholic Education, Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools (REN)



Bonnie Annicchiarico
Director of GrACE

ACSTA SPICE and Blueprints Retreat: Walking Together in Catholic Education

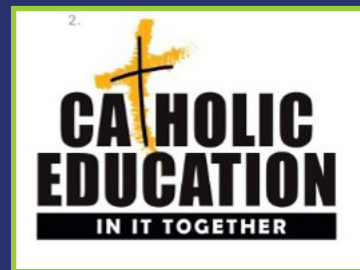
You are invited to register for the 2023 SPICE Retreat (April 27-April 30) and Blueprints Retreat (May 2-5) with guest speaker Mike Patin at the beautiful Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge.

Please see the ACSTA Website (linked below) for more detailed information about registering and your accommodations.

- † [SPICE Retreat](#)
- † [Blueprints Retreat](#)

GrACE Launches Advocacy Brand for 2023

In the fall GrACE commissioned the amazing design team from Calgary Catholic Schools to create a tag to promote Catholic education across the province. We hope that you and your local GrACE groups will use the new brand to promote and advocate for Catholic education. As we all embrace the new tag we create unity across the province with a common emblem and message. Please let gracedirector7@gmail.com know of your plans so we can share best practices and ideas with all advocates.



New Community Engagement Presentation 2023 Released

GrACE is proud to release an updated version of our community engagement presentation. Designed for 90 minutes but adaptable for 2-3 shorter sessions, GrACE Engagement presentation is perfect for school councils, staff meetings, parish councils, general Catholic education events and any opportunity you can create to continue the conversation around Catholic education. Please contact Bonnie if you have any questions or concerns about how to move forward.

[GrACE Community Engagement Presentation 2023](#)



Catholic School District's Publications

- † [Calgary Catholic School District](#)
- † [Redeemer Revelations](#)

Holy Spirit Catholic Schools Host NET 2022-2023

Submitted by Aaron Skretting, Director of Religious Education, Holy Spirit Catholic Schools

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” Pope Paul VI

In the spring of 2022, I was fortunate in my role as Director of Religious Education for Holy Spirit Catholic Schools to be a part of initial planning for our Lethbridge parishes, All Saints Parish and St. Martha’s Parish, to host a National Evangelization Team (NET) Ministries discipleship team. Thanks to the hard work of many in our community, NET landed a team in Lethbridge for the 2022-2023 school year to share their faith and journey with the young people of Lethbridge and area. NET Canada’s mission is to challenge young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the church, and a discipleship team is hosted and embedded into the community to renew youth groups, minister to unchurched youth, guide small group faith studies, and live with families as they witness to their faith. In Lethbridge, one of our goals is to rebuild our youth ministry after the impacts of Covid, and to support the work that is done between home, school, and parish to foster our Catholic youth, particularly those between grades six and twelve.

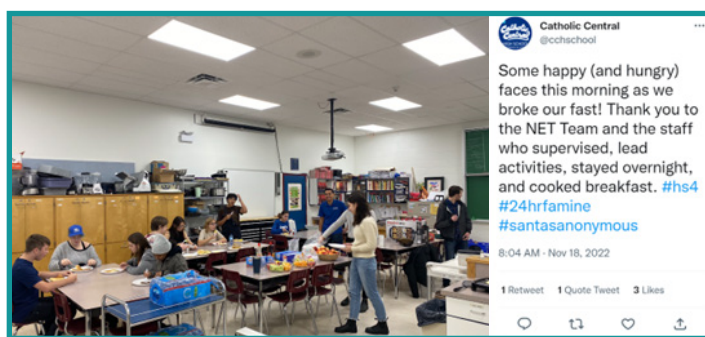
Our steering committee in Lethbridge has many different aspects to coordinate. The leadership committee meets biweekly to connect with the team, to see how things are going and what supports are required for their work. There are members who coordinate the housing and logistics for our team of five missionaries, finding families who will host two or three in their homes for two week periods. There is a fundraising committee that is responsible for overseeing any events that have a fundraising aspect attached to them, and for the stewardship of the resources required to host the team on a parish level. We have school liaisons who are helping to facilitate access and promote activities in the schools that are connected to the parishes, and a variety of others who have stepped up to help plan and deliver events on an ad hoc basis. The team is also supported in providing youth groups for both junior and senior high school age groups, and has future plans for some retreat activities in the spring.

In the fall of 2022, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter to Young People. In that letter, they note that today’s young people “value opportunities for dialogue,” and “wish to hear and be heard, to seek advice and guidance, and to have (their) own experience and wisdom validated.” They recognize that this dialogue “offers a chance to understand one another better, to share one another’s gifts, and it creates a space where the Gospel message can ignite a spark deep within our hearts and transform each of us.” This dialogue is rooted in the relationships that we build with young people, because it is through trust and authenticity that open and honest communication is enabled. Our NET team, through their attendance and participation at functions such as our divisional Arise and Shine concert, the 24 hour famine connected to Catholic Central High School’s Santa’s Anonymous project, and school masses among others, is one way that they are witnessing to our community and building relationships. They also provide opportunities for dialogue in



their small group formation and youth groups, as well as at events that we have held locally. There is also the opportunity for relationship building and dialogue when with their host families, around the kitchen table and being present with one another in evening and weekend activities.

I can speak to the impact of the NET team from a professional level (my role in schools), a parish level (my liaison role), and also a personal level (my role as parent). We were fortunate to host the NET team upon their arrival in late September, and saw over the course of our time together how relationships were formed and fostered, as we ate together, played together, and visited about life and faith. My wife and I have three teen-aged children, two of which are in the youth categories that the NET team is serving, and so I thought it would be appropriate to include their perspective on the team’s impact so far this year.





Anna – Grade 9

Our family hosted the NET missionaries early on in their arrival to Lethbridge. As a start to their evangelization, the parish hosted a spaghetti supper for the families to get acquainted with them. One of their first interactions with the schools was the Saint Francis School’s Opening Mass, where they were able to meet a few students after the mass. They have added a sense of belonging to the youth of the community who need a place to belong after school. For Junior High students, we are able to meet once a week, and belong to a community. The NET missionaries have planned many events for the youth of our community including a night at the Corn Maze, a movie night, bowling, pumpkin carving and more. As they stayed with us, it was interesting to learn and hear about their faith journeys, families, and what brought them to where they are now. One of the ways my family was able to connect with them was through board games. Many evenings and afternoons were spent playing Settlers of Catan, Coup and teaching them our family favorite games.

Paul – Grade 11

In the first semester of the school year, the NET missionaries were a large part of our household. The many nights spent talking, playing games were a cornerstone to getting to know them well. Their presence in our school was made known as they sat into various classes getting to know the student population. Sunday night youth groups for high school aged students were inviting, and full of camaraderie. Nights often ended with the playing of the piano in the hall, after having conversations and discussions about leading a religious life in today’s secular world. Through these weekly conversations, we gained insight on one another’s lives, experiences and interests in ways one might not have otherwise expected to. Planned events at the corn maze, and movie nights have been a way to create a large community of people to deepen our relationships with one another.

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI described evangelization as “a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative.” These varied elements have each been present in our experience with the NET team so far. They accepted the signs that Lethbridge would be fruitful soil for a team, and entered our community (homes, schools and parishes) to build relationships with those that they encountered. Their inner adherence to the faith has been witnessed in those same homes, schools, and parishes, and has positioned them, through relationship, to proclaim the Gospel effectively to our youth as we seek the renewal of humanity.

Catholic Education Prayers of the Faithful for February 2023

- † For Catholic education: for unity and a true desire to seek the will of God, we pray to the Lord
- † For Catholic Education: That our Catholic schools may show the love of God in the world, we pray to the Lord.
- † For Catholic Education: 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.
- † For Catholic Education: That the teachers in our Catholic schools may be strengthened for their important task in our world, we pray to the Lord.

Blog Links from ACSTA

Read and share these articles on Catholic education with YOUR stakeholders!

- † [Learning from Catholic Schools Outside of Alberta \(acsta.ab.ca\)](https://www.acsta.ab.ca/learning-from-catholic-schools-outside-of-alberta) by Matthew Hoven

Catholic Education Panel St. Joseph’s College, University of Alberta

Join St. Joseph’s College at the University of Alberta on Feb. 8 for a virtual panel discussing the 2022 Vatican document “The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue.” The panel will outline the document’s construction, its place within church teaching, and how it acts as a practical tool to address the religious identity of Catholic schools amidst rapid social change tied to globalization and intercultural dialogue.

Register in advance for the panel here:
[SJCCathEdPanelFeb8.pdf](#) - Google Drive

**Crisis and Encounter in Catholic Schools:
In Dialogue with a Vatican Document**

A St. Joseph’s College Speaker Series Event,
Panel Discussion on Catholic Education

DR. MAX ENGEL, CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY, PANELIST
DR. EUGENIA KOWALCZYK, SJC LECTURER, PANELIST
MR. CHARLIE WECKEND, RE CONSULTANT, PANELIST
DR. MATT HOVEN, SJC PETER & DORIS KULE CHAIR, PANELIST
DR. DEAN SARNECKI, MODERATOR

**Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 7:00-8:30pm (MT),
on Zoom** - Register in advance for this event:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82684902067?pwd=Uk9lbnhlcUJlZDZlMm5lTGp0aWZkdDZkdz09>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Our panel discussion on the 2022 Vatican document “The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue” (Congregation for Catholic Education) will outline the document’s construction, its place within church teaching, and how it acts as a practical tool to address the religious identity of Catholic schools amidst rapid social change tied to globalization and intercultural dialogue.

Connect Online

We ask you to help us celebrate Catholic education in Alberta. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Post your pictures and tag us so we can share them and celebrate too. Thanks for being a grateful advocate in support of Catholic education!

- † GrACE Facebook address is www.facebook.com/GrACE4cathed
- † Twitter: [@GrACE4cathed](https://twitter.com/GrACE4cathed)
- † Instagram: [@grace4catholiceducation](https://www.instagram.com/grace4catholiceducation)
- † GrACE website
- † Email: gracedirector7@gmail.com

GrACE Assurance Document

Ever wondered what GrACE is all about? The GrACE Assurance document provides historical background and details about mission, vision, values and principles. For a deeper understanding about GrACE, check it out!

[GrACE Assurance Document 2022-2023.pdf](#) – Google Drive

Top Advocacy Tool Kit Tips

- 1. Educate**
Read the [GrACE Assurance document](#) to enhance your understanding
- 2. Engage**
Choose a date for your first community engagement of 2023. Invite personally. Plan for 90 minutes of genuine conversation and enthusiasm!
- 3. Unite**
Ask you priest and parish council members to join your GrACE group
- 4. Communicate**
Make plans to brand 2023 Catholic education advocacy with the new GrACE tag.

 **CCSTA** @CCSTAconnect · Jan 10

A huge CCSTA WELCOME to the newest member of our CCSTA Team: Michelle Collett, Executive Assistant.

We look forward to working with you, Michelle and are grateful for your YES to the mission of Catholic Education!

Please join us in welcoming Michelle!

Catholic Education Outside our Province

[Ontario court sides with Catholic schools over public funding challenge \(catholicregister.org\)](#)

“We never, ever take for granted support or the need to celebrate the amazing things that are happening in Catholic schools across Ontario every day,” Daly said. “We have very strong relationships with the provincial parties in Ontario, the current government. We work hard at that.”



CCSTA Hires Michelle Collett

Congratulations to Alberta’s Michelle Collett who has been hired by Canadian Catholic School Trustees’ Association (CCSTA) as their new executive assistant. Michelle has recently been Board Secretary for Edmonton Catholic School District and previously the well respected executive assistant for ACSTA. We wish you all the best, Michelle and thank you for your dedication to Catholic education.



Social Media from Around the Province

OLOP @OLOPecsd · 21h

We gathered today with joyful hearts to celebrate the Feast of Epiphany, the culmination of our Christmas season. Our students learned about the gifts of the Magi and what gift we can bring Jesus - our love. Thank you Fr. Glenn for joining us! [#ecsdfaithinspires](#)

Father Doucet School @frdoucet_ccsd · Jan 9

Grade 1T is welcoming in the New Year by thinking of ways to spread love in 2023. [#ccsd #faithhopelove](#)

Greg Miller @millerg6 · Jan 12

Tonight is the first session of our [#gpcsd Faith Leadership Series](#) and we are blessed to have [@LeoGEnglish2](#) working with this amazing group.

Christ the Redeemer Catholic School Division

10h · 📍

Assumption RC
1d · 📍

Thank you to all the children who Alter Serve at Sacred Heart Parish!! Today Father Rodel recognized this great service the children do each Sunday and at school masses!! [#IBelieveinCatholicEd](#)

Melissa Cuglietta Damur @melissadamur · 4h

Thank you to our Superintendent [@Paul_P_Corrigan](#) for giving a heartfelt and faith inspiring talk at [@EICSCatholic](#) Theology on Tap. Walked away with a stronger understanding of the contributions of the late Pope Benedict XVI

Scott Walker @MrWalkerEICS · 11h

The lovely tradition of the prayer bags for our grade 12s during their English diploma exams continued yesterday! Brautiful and inspirational bags decorated by students from our elementary schools and filled with brain power fuelling treats from our parent council!

[Show this thread](#)

St. JPll Catholic @STJPIICATHOLIC · 21h
 Staff gathered for morning mass followed by Adoration for classes. Beautiful way to begin the day.
 #ecssdPEACE

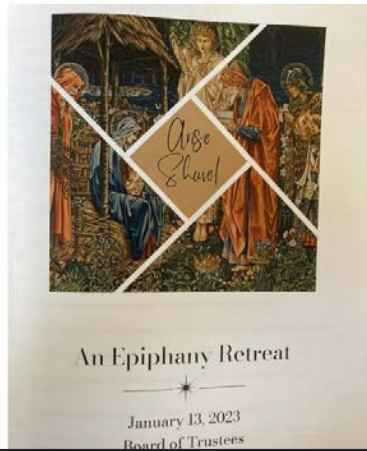


STAR Catholic @STARCatholic · 4h
 Did you know that Catholic & public boards save taxpayers millions of dollars each year through partnerships such as purchasing, transportation & other shared services? Catholic schools are an important publicly funded part of Alberta's education system!

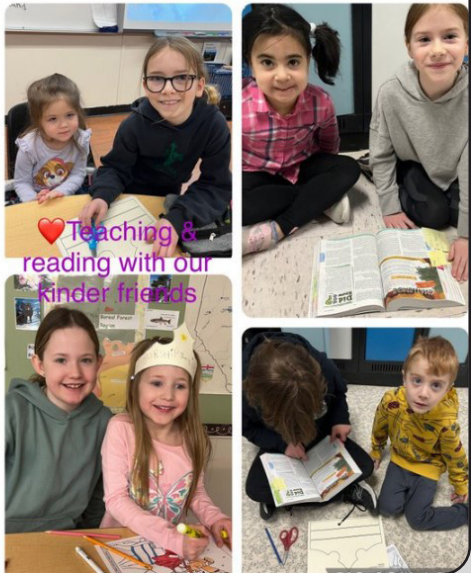
#IBelieveInCatholicEd



Carmen Mombourquette @Mombouc · 3h
 Taking part in an excellent retreat with fellow Holy Spirit trustees led by Aaron Skretting. Used the Pope's teaching about 'desire' to help set the stage for visioning about the future.



@mrsrafuse @MrsRafuse4 · Jan 10
 Truly we are "Better Together" when 4RN reads from our Bibles the story of the Visit of 3 Wisemen to teach about the Epiphany
 @stncatholic @EICSCatholic



Mrs. Oliverio @mrs_oliverio · 7h
 Starting the New Year talking about how we can show love for others just like Jesus did. @stjerome_ccsd @CCSD_edu #agapelove

