



## Message from GrACE Executive Director

Dear GrACE Advocates and Friends in Christ,

Catholic education is uniquely protected by denominational rights enshrined in Canada's Constitution.

This constitutional protection recognizes the historical and ongoing importance of Catholic education within the Canadian education system.

Defending these rights involves advocating for and ensuring the continued recognition and provision for Catholic education within the broader educational landscape.

Raising our Catholic education profile involves enhancing the visibility and understanding of Catholic education.

Sharing the unique benefits and contributions of Catholic Schools helps to increase support and awareness among the public.

Catholic education is not only about academic learning but also about instilling values, ethics, and a sense of community.

This theme for this year's Catholic education, 'Courage to Lead', underscores both the challenge and responsibility that comes with maintaining and advancing Catholic education in a rapidly changing and increasingly secular society.

As Catholics we share a commitment to maintain the distinctive character and mission of Catholic education.

We are called to practice and promote the teachings and values of Catholicism within the School environment and also in the wider community.

Each and everyone of us is invited to actively live and serve our faith.

We are challenged to defend our rights; raise our Catholic education profile and spread its good word as people of hope.

Jesus said to his Disciples 'you will be my witness to the ends of the earth'.

This is still our mission..

### What is Your Catholic Legacy?

As Jesus said,

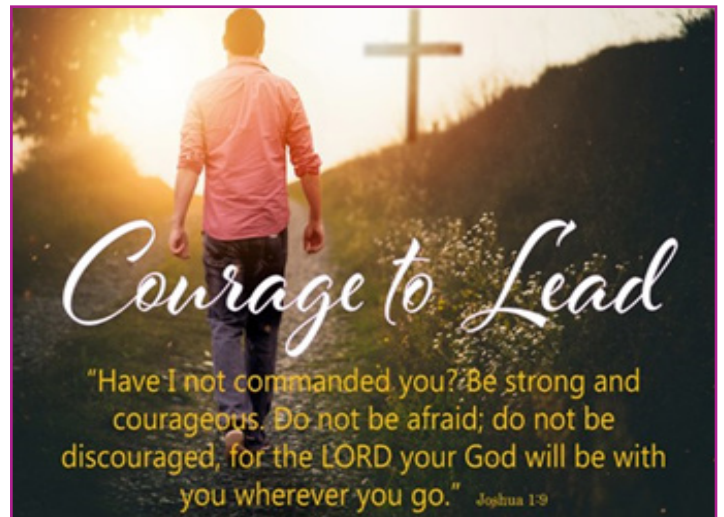
'The Kingdom of God is as if some-one would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, yet he does not know how'.

Please share GrACE's Newsletter and also advise me further how GrACE might truly come alive in service and support of Catholic education.

Together, let's extend our reach to ensure that every member of our Catholic Community is connected and enrolled in our shared vision of Catholic excellence in education; nurturing hearts, minds and souls.

**Kate**

Executive Director GrACE  
[gracedirector7@gmail.com](mailto:gracedirector7@gmail.com)



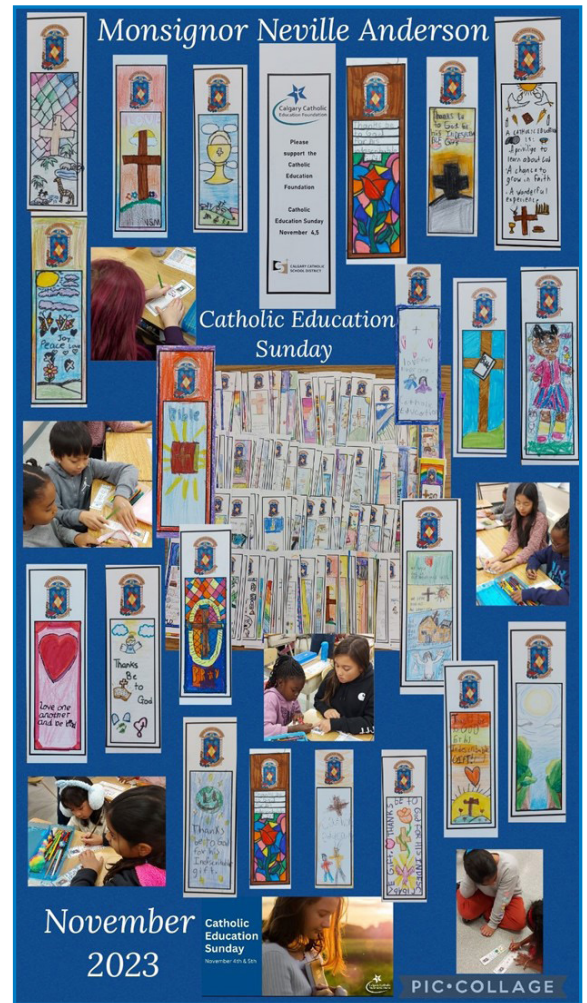
*Rooted in the synodal practices of listening, dialogue and discernment, let us pray for our year's theme 'Courage to Lead'.*

# Celebrating Catholic Education Sunday; Catholic education and Catholic Educators for making a difference in the lives of our Students; our Families and our Communities!

Pope Francis, who was a teacher himself, said that ‘educating is an act of love; it is like giving life’.

GrACE thanks all Catholic Teachers; Educators; Trustees; Superintendents; Administrators; Staff and Clergy for their time; energy and effort in honouring the diversity of every Student; for supporting the well-being of all and for their daily commitment to academic excellence.

STAR Catholic is a Christ-centred Catholic School Community of 12 Schools across six central Alberta communities and is grateful ‘for our Catholic Schools that reveal the Glory of God in all that we do.



To thank God for His indescribable gift of Catholic education, Monsignor Neville Anderson Students in Calgary coloured bookmarks and shared them with the whole Catholic Community throughout Alberta and beyond!

## Upfront with the Archbishop

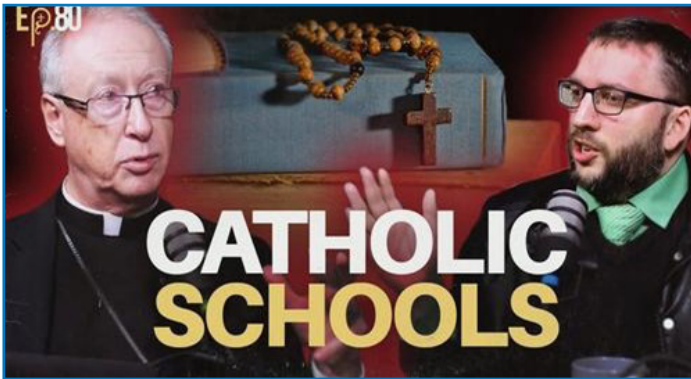
Upfront with Archbishop Smith is a weekly podcast where we seek to bridge the gap between the hierarchy and the faithful by discussing the beauty, truth, and challenges of our Catholic faith.





# Celebrating Catholic Education Sunday: Leading Courageously throughout Alberta and beyond

‘Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered’ —Proverbs 11:24-25



For Catholic Education Sunday. Archbishop Smith and Chair of GrACE, along with Teacher Brett Fawcett from Elk Island Catholic Schools, Chesterton Academy discussed the Catholic School system, the role of teachers in proclaiming the Gospel and the role of parents as primary educators.

[Click here](#)



Vice Chair of GrACE and Chief Superintendent of Calgary Catholic, Dr. Bryan Szumlas celebrated the gift of Catholic education in advance of Catholic Education Sunday.

Speaking with Janet Lymer, Executive Director of Calgary Catholic Education Foundation about the importance of Catholic Education Sunday and how we can all support Catholic education.

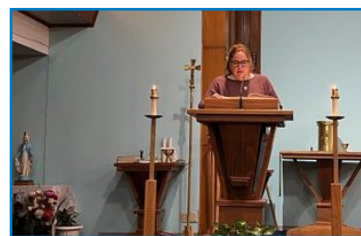
Calgary Catholic proudly serves approximately 61,000 Students in 118 Schools in Calgary and the surrounding area and also offers online learning for Alberta Students in Grades 1-12.

[Chief's Vlog—Catholic Education Sunday](#)



Fr. Julian Bilyj, an Edmonton Catholic Schools Chaplain, also talks about Courage to Lead in advance of Catholic Education Sunday, November 05, 2023

[Click here](#)



In parishes throughout Alberta, NWT and the Yukon representatives from Catholic Schools gave witness to Catholic Education at Sunday Masses in all of our Parishes on November 04 and 05, 2023.

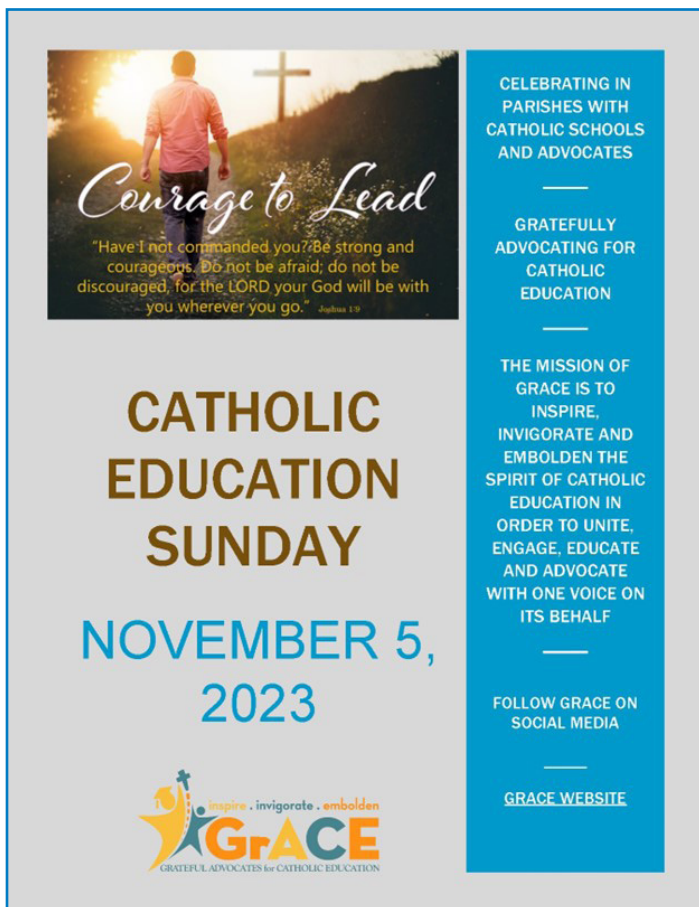
**Northwest Territories: Yellowknife Catholic School's Catholic Education Sunday, Nurturing Leadership with a Mass of Hope.**

**Catholic education Sunday took place on November 04 and 05, 2023**

Almighty God bless all people involved in Catholic education

## Northern Alberta

Serving 7,000 Students in 13 Schools, **Fort Mc Murray Catholic Schools** marked Catholic Education Sunday as a day of hope and a reminder to all Catholics of the enduring strength that our Faith provides us!



CELEBRATING IN PARISHES WITH CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND ADVOCATES

GRATEFULLY ADVOCATING FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

THE MISSION OF GRACE IS TO INSPIRE, INVIGORATE AND EMBOLDEN THE SPIRIT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN ORDER TO UNITE, ENGAGE, EDUCATE AND ADVOCATE WITH ONE VOICE ON ITS BEHALF

FOLLOW GRACE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

GRACE WEBSITE

**CATHOLIC EDUCATION SUNDAY**

**NOVEMBER 5, 2023**

**GrACE**  
GRATEFUL ADVOCATES for CATHOLIC EDUCATION

## Southern Alberta

**Holy Spirit Catholic School Division** took a stroll down memory lane and posted for Catholic Education Sunday ‘Public Education – The Catholic Way’ – a video created to highlight the importance of Catholic Education in southern Alberta.

[Click here for video](#)

## Edmonton

**Madonna Catholic School**, a newly modernized French Immersion Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 4 Catholic School located centrally in Sherwood Park as part of Elk Island Catholic Schools, celebrated Catholic Education Sunday.

[Click here](#) [Click here](#)

## Further Students; Parents; Family and Parishioner Engagement:

**How can we more actively involve even more Parents and Families in our Student’s education?**

**What can we do to foster a strong home-school partnership and provide Parent’s with further support for their Child’s Catholic School experience?**

GrACE continues to emphasize the unique benefits and contributions of Catholic education, providing a holistic education that combines academic excellence with faith-based values.

As we champion our commitment to reach Catholic Parents and supporters, GrACE provides an inclusive and welcoming environment that encourages dialogue and understanding.

Parents are the first educators and in a synodal Church where we are invited to listen to not only the voice of the magisterium but also the whole people of God .

In seeking to discern the action of the Holy Spirit, we must fully appreciate our Catholic Parents who chose for their children an education rooted securely in a deep and compassionate, Christ-centred understanding of service and sharing both within and beyond the Catholic Community.

Aligned with GrACE’s core values, let’s explore innovative strategies that will enhance engagement with your Student bodies; Catholic Parents and Parishioners; and all stakeholders within the wider Catholic education movement in Alberta and beyond.

## The Gift of public funded Catholic Education

Our Catholic Faith is at the centre of all our efforts, fostering an environment that nurtures academic excellence; spiritual growth and a sense of collective responsibility in upholding the mission and values of Catholic education in our shared society.

Listen to the history of our publicly funded Catholic education system and its role in the development of our great country told by Justice Feehan.

[Click here for video](#) [ACSTA Post on X](#)



## Celebrate Catholic Education

Publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta is a unique and cherished historical gift for which we are all grateful.

It is an invaluable offering to both the Catholic Community and wider society, carrying growing responsibility in an increasingly secular world.

Catholic Schools provide an education that goes beyond academic subjects and fosters character development, empathy, and compassion.

With the evolving landscape of education, it is increasingly important to celebrate Catholic Schools and to extol those aspects that have made the Catholic Schools and education system influential and valued throughout Alberta and beyond.

**GrACE's Newsletter seeks to build a provincial Catholic community by celebrating Catholic education across Alberta.**

## Student Faith Day Inspires Gratitude and Reflection at John Costello School

Calgary, October 19, 2023

Students at John Costello School recently came together to celebrate Student Faith Day, a special event designed to encourage spiritual growth, gratitude, and reflection. With a theme centered around "We are grateful for all that God gives us," the day was filled with activities that fostered a deeper appreciation for life's blessings. The half-day event focused on the main presentations given by guest Sarah Simoni (Religious Education Special Project Staff Teacher) to each division and the Gratitude Walk, which was a highlight of the day.

The preparation began with thought-provoking questions to guide students, prompting them to think about their own God-given gifts and talents and the importance of sharing these with others. The presentations started with Sarah teaching the students a song about gratitude (with actions!), and they also explored the concept of thanksgiving and its connection to the Eucharist, deepening their understanding of faith.

Following the presentations, students engaged in personal reflection, using various creative methods to express their gratitude for God's gifts in the categories of creation, talents, and the people who enrich their lives.

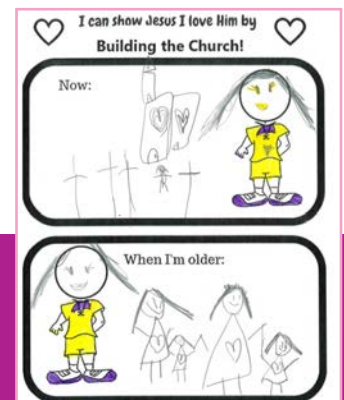
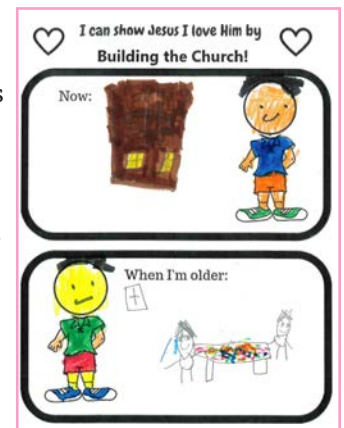
## There are so many positive stories to celebrate Catholic Schools and Education in Alberta and beyond.

### Holy Spirit Catholic Separate School Division

**Twenty First Century Faith** by Caryn Swark, Associate Principal at Our Lady of the Assumption School

How does our faith find a place in the rapidly shifting and changing cultural and educational landscape of the twenty first century? Our Lady of the Assumption School in Lethbridge, Alberta is making that connection. For the last several years, OLA has held monthly STEAM days. Students participate in a wide variety of activities in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math with the aim of fostering critical thinking and creativity. As always, everything we do is through the lens of our Catholic faith. For the month of October, the theme of our STEAM Day was Building the Church, in keeping with our Holy Spirit

faith theme of Build: Pilgrims of Hope! Older students constructed model churches out of found materials while younger students did an amazing job of showing how they can build the church now and when they are older through their artwork. Here are some examples of these amazing student works!



The Gratitude Walk, an outdoor visual journal activity, encouraged students to connect with the beauty of God's creation and appreciate the natural world around them. This activity was a chance for students to record their observations and later engage in a class discussion about the wonders of nature.

Buddy classes came together for a heartwarming postcard activity, where students expressed their gratitude to people who have made a positive impact on their lives. This exercise reinforced the importance of showing appreciation for others.

In the midst of these activities, Father Edmund from St. Michael's Parish paid a visit to the classrooms, answering questions and laying the foundation for building stronger connections with the parish in the future.

The day concluded with a final prayer, emphasizing the importance of using one's gifts and talents to make the world a better place. Students left Student Faith Day with hearts full of gratitude and a deeper understanding of the blessings that surround them.

The Student Faith Day planning team of Marianne Murray, Dannielle Korol and Alison McDonald concluded the event was a resounding success, demonstrating that gratitude and reflection can inspire students to embrace the values of faith and thankfulness in their lives. Student Faith Day at John Costello School is set to become a cherished tradition, fostering spiritual growth and community engagement.



## We ask you to help us celebrate Catholic Education throughout Alberta and beyond

Assist GrACE:

- † Sign up for GrACE's Monthly Newsletter
- † Share GrACE's Monthly Newsletter
- † Celebrate Catholic Schools and education
- † Provide information to share in GrACE's Monthly Newsletter
- † Tell your positive stories and benefits from your Catholic School and education
- † Subscribe to GrACE's Facebook; Twitter and social media pages
- † Enrol Parents to become more actively involved in GrACE
- † Support local GrACE groups in your Parish
- † Ensure the GrACE Database has your correct contact information
- † Encourage a sense of collective responsibility in upholding the mission and values of Catholic Education in our shared society
- † Make a stand for Catholic Schools and education in Alberta and beyond
- † Assert your choice in favour of Catholic Schools and education and its values
- † Champion the benefits of Catholic Schools and education, alongside its broader implications for the spiritual, intellectual, and social development of individuals and society as a whole
- † Action a movement
- † Provide information to share in GrACE's Monthly Newsletter
- † Subscribe to GrACE's Facebook; Twitter and social media pages
- † Share your positive stories and benefits from your Catholic School and education
- † Post your pictures and tag us so we can share them and celebrate too



## November – all Saints Day and all Souls Day

‘Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen’.

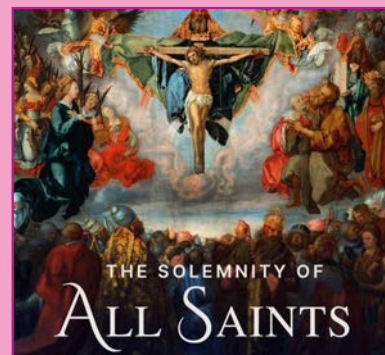
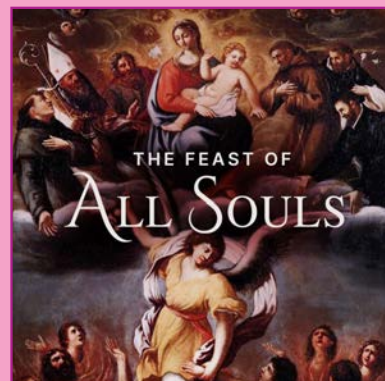
On this day, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, we remember and pray for those who have gone before us and especially those who have been forgotten or have no one to pray for them.

‘Come, brothers and sisters, let us at length spur ourselves on. . . Let us long for those who are longing for us, hasten to those who are waiting for us, and ask those who look for our coming to intercede for us. We should not only want to be with the saints, we should also hope to possess their happiness’.

– St. Bernard, Abbot

On the Solemnity of All Saints (also known as All Hallows’ Day), we celebrate and honor all known and unknown saints.

All you holy men and women, pray for us!

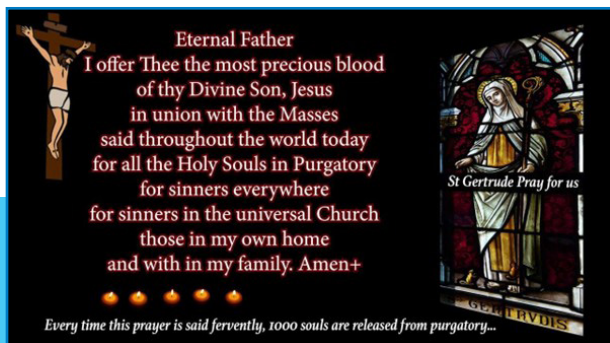
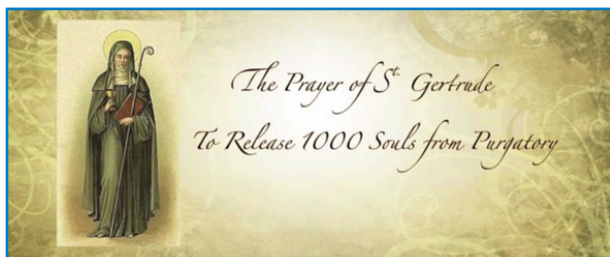


## Also in November:

### We prayed the Novena of St. Gertrude in advance of her Feast Day on November 16, 2023

St. Gertrude the Great was told by Our Lord that each time she piously recited the prayer below, it would release 1,000 souls from their suffering in purgatory.

[St. Gertrude the Great Novena - Pray More Novenas - Novena Prayers & Catholic Devotion](#)



### Lest we forget Remembrance Day, November 11, 2023

In 1897 Rudyard Kipling (d. 1936) composed a poem entitled ‘Recessional’, where he reminds readers not to forget what is not to be obliterated. In the poem, he underscores the phrase ‘lest we forget’.

‘God of our fathers, known of old,  
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,  
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold  
Dominion over palm and pine—  
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget—lest we forget!’

On this day, we paused in a silent moment of remembrance for the individuals who have served during times of war, conflict and peace



On November 08, 2023, Veterans Day, we especially honoured and remembered the significant contributions made by First Nations, Metis and Inuit soldiers and veterans and their long distinguished legacy in service to Canada

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/a-day-of-remembrance>

Later in the month, during Métis Week, November 13-19, 2023, the Métis people brought us together to share their history, culture and stories with people across Alberta and Canada.

Every year, at this time, in memory of Louis Riel's wrongful execution, the Métis people honour and celebrate the Métis Nation.

The Métis are, and have always been, a distinct people with a shared past and a shared future.

Recognizing the role of reconciliation in our shared future, we are called, once again, by Archbishop Smith to listen and to love during his key note presentation at the recent Braiding Together 2023 Conference where he summarized progress in what has been a historic year for listening, learning and working to rebuild longstanding relationships that have been profoundly damaged by the legacy of Residential Schools.

His Grace reminded us of the meaningful steps towards a more loving future including the fact that Pope Francis apologized on behalf of the Church for the sins of her children; acknowledged the catastrophic impact of the residential school system; called on us to promote the rights of Indigenous Peoples and to favour processes of healing and reconciliation.

Archbishop Smith reaffirmed the long-term commitment to walk with Indigenous Partners in Canada's long journey for healing and reconciliation.

**O Blessed Virgin, Our Lady of Guadalupe Intercede for us with your Son That we who live in this land, Indigenous and non-Indigenous together may experience healing and reconciliation, on a renewed journey for justice and peace for our children. Mother of the Church, pray for us.**



## GrACE Says Thank You...

Special thank you to the dedicated GrACE volunteers for their tireless efforts to support the work of GrACE. You are SO appreciated by us all!



**Michelle Collette**  
GrACE Treasurer



**Jolyne deMarco**  
GrACE Instagram Administrator



**Grant Gay**  
GrACE Facebook Administrator

## Further Opportunities to Volunteer

Student Volunteers are warmly invited to represent their School in GrACE's social media campaign; GrACE's new outreach and GrACE's database development.

All thoughts on how we can better utilize technology platforms to ensure even more timely communication channels between and within the wider Catholic education Family and beyond gratefully received.

Please email [gracedirector7@gmail.com](mailto:gracedirector7@gmail.com) to express interest and suggestions.



## Connect with GrACE Online

Follow GrACE on Facebook and Twitter. 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! @GrACE4cathed

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

**'Pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on you.'**

*Adapted saying of  
my old Irish Dominican  
Parish Priest*

## Catholic Education Prayers of the Faithful for December 2023

- † For Catholic education: That during this season of Advent we may prepare our heart, minds and lives to welcome the Baby Jesus
- † For Catholic Teachers: That their witness to hope in the Lord will be manifest daily, we pray to the Lord
- † For Catholic education: That each one of our Catholic School Districts will seek to build Bethlehem in our Schools and our hearts, we pray to the Lord
- † For Catholic education: That JOY may be manifest in our every word, action and thought, we pray to the Lord

## Synod

Let us continue to pray for Catholics having the 'Courage to Lead' in the Synod and in the safe space it creates to listen and to dialogue around 'the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age' as laity and clergy together take responsibility for a faithful response to the Church's mission. Prayer for the synod is a way of asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the process of discernment and decision-making of the Church.

Good and gracious God, heavenly Father, we thank You for the wisdom and grace You have given us through Your Son, Jesus. Increase our faith so that we may hear the voice of our Good Shepherd and joyfully follow the path His love illuminates before us.

YOU ARE CALLED.  
YOU MATTER.  
**YOU** belong  
catholiccyc.ca/RENEWAL

LOS CATÓLICOS  
EN LA DIÓCESIS DE CALGARY  
ESTÁN LLAMADOS A:  
FORMAR DISCÍPULOS EN LA MISIÓN

**TAKE SMALLER STEPS, BUT TOGETHER**

Bishop McGrattan has returned to Calgary after spending a month at the Synod of Bishops in Rome. Brimming with enthusiasm and a renewed spirit of hope, he shares his experiences from the Synod floor and conveys his anticipation for our Pastoral Renewal upon his homecoming.

[READ HIS MESSAGE](#)

Faithfully  
FAITH. LIVED. FULLY.

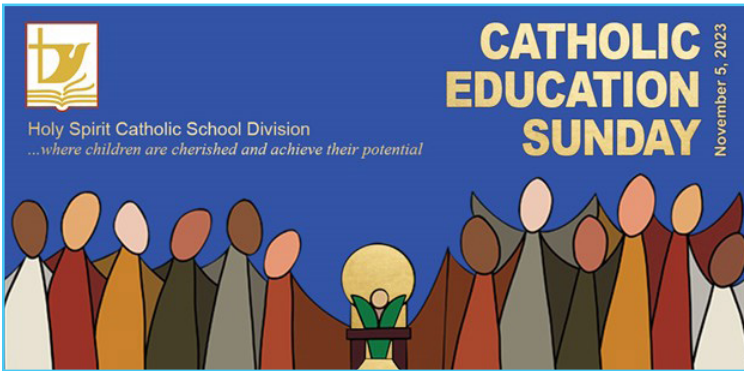
Let us also pray for the Pope, so that in the exercise of his mission, he may continue to accompany in the faith the flock entrusted to him by Jesus, always with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**For the Pope**

November 2023

THE POPE VIDEO  
Catholic Education Pastoral Renewal

# Social Media from around the Province...

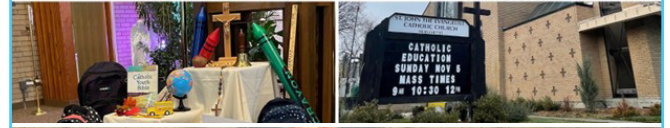
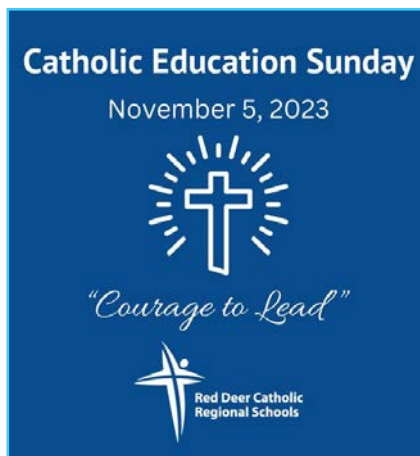


Holy Spirit Catholic School Division provides exceptional Catholic education and gathered together in its Parishes to recognize and celebrate the gift of Catholic education on November 04 and 05, 2023.



School Administrator, Shelley Gornte shared the gift of Catholic education in Alberta on behalf of St. Mark CCSD

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools celebrated Catholic Education Sunday on November 05, 2023 as a day to come together to celebrate the gift of Catholic education.



Edmonton Catholic School District feels blessed in Alberta to have publicly funded Catholic education and celebrated on Catholic education Sunday the partnership between School, Home and Parish as partners in an outstanding Christ-centred learning experience for its Students.





St. Nicholas Catholic School within EICS is an English and Ukrainian Bilingual Elementary School providing quality education for Students in K-4 and is grateful for the many wonderful visits with Father Vince.

## WHY DO YOU LOVE CATHOLIC EDUCATION?



Lakeland Catholic School Division loves Catholic education because it embeds our Catholic Christian values into everyday learning!

**Why do you love Catholic education?**

[Share your reason in the comments section!](#)

