



The **Catholic Bishops**
of **Alberta** and the
Northwest Territories

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

8421 - 101 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6A 0L1 | T 780.469.1010 F 780.465.3003

Catholic Education Week – October 21 – 25, 2024

“Testify! Share the Reason for your Hope!”

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Among the many beautiful gifts flowing to us from the font of God’s providential love is that of our Catholic schools. At their centre stands the person of Jesus Christ, who seeks a personal and life-transforming encounter with each of the students. From our knowledge and love of Christ arises an unshakeable hope that fills us with peace and joy.

In his first letter, Saint Peter teaches us always to be ready to share with others the reason for our hope (cf. *1Peter* 3:15). The urgency of this call is underscored in our day by the widespread anxiety and, at times, despair seizing the hearts of many people, including some of our students and their families. For this reason, the Catholic educational community of Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon has chosen as the theme of Catholic Education Week: “Testify! Share the Reason for your Hope”. Let us all be ready and eager to give an account of the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

There are many opportunities to share this hope. We learn how to do so in the home, first of all. How beautiful it is when parents share with their children the story of their relationship with Jesus and the hope they have drawn from his love! Our participation in the life of the parish is another privileged venue where we become ever more deeply grounded in the love of our Lord and the hope he alone can give. In Catholic Education Week, we give particular attention to our schools as places where hope in Christ is not only fostered but also shared. In these Catholic institutions, students and staff alike are called to have a clear understanding of our faith and articulate it before others. So, let us ask: How might we share with one another the hope that springs from our relationship with Jesus Christ and fidelity to his Gospel? What opportunities can we create for these discussions – in the classroom, the staff room, the administration offices, or the trustee boardroom?

Of course, our readiness to explain our faith is about not only intellectual knowledge but also living it out authentically. When our words and actions align with Christ's teachings of love, compassion, and grace, the credibility of our testimony is strengthened. How can we help one another grow as authentic witnesses to the Lord?

With this letter, we, the Bishops of Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon, wish to thank everyone involved in the ministry and mission of Catholic Education: our students, teachers, support staff, administrators, trustees, parents, and parish priests. We are grateful for the many ways you accept the call to lead our students to Jesus and help them embrace the hope he alone can give.

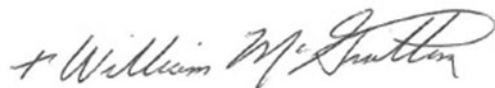
Together, let us joyfully share with others, in both word and deed, the joy we have found in Jesus Christ, who is the all-sufficient reason for the hope that animates our lives.

Yours in Christ,

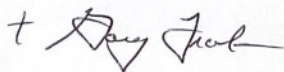
Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



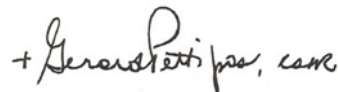
Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Alberta Liaison Bishop for Catholic Education
Archbishop of Edmonton



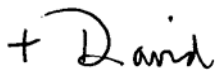
Most Reverend William McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary



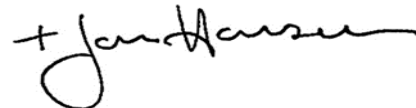
Most Reverend Gary Franken
Bishop of St. Paul



Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas
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



Most Reverend Héctor Vila
Bishop of Whitehorse