

GrACE Newsletter

January 2024

Message from the GrACE Executive Director

Dear GrACE Colleagues and Advocates,

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.

By amplifying the voices of the Catholic Education Family, each and every one of you - as GrACE Advocates - makes a significant impact in promoting the unique benefits and contributions of Catholic education in Alberta and beyond.

Catholic education ensures that every Student, regardless of their background or financial circumstances, has unhindered access to unlock their boundless potential gifted by God Himself and combines academic excellence; inclusivity; faith and a deep respect for the potential within each individual.

By actively engaging with each other as like minded Catholics but also with detractors, fostering open dialogue, and advocating for Catholic values in curriculum development and educational policies, we all play a vital role in advancing the wider Catholic Education movement.

Through our collective efforts and open communication, we engage and inspire others to actively participate in the GrACE coalition, advocating for the unique benefits and values of Catholic education.



Together we are a movement to build the capacity of the Catholic community throughout Alberta and beyond.

Let's extend our reach to ensure that everyone we know is connected to our shared vision of Catholic excellence in education; nurturing hearts, minds and souls.

If you have any questions for GrACE, please feel free to reach out to me.

In the meantime, I also ask you to share the GrACE movement with all your Students and Families in service and support of Catholic education.

Kate

Executive Director, GrACE

gracedirector7@gmail.com

Inside the January

2024



Newsletter

Mission of GrACE

GrACE began as a conversation within the Catholic education community to 'weave together the voices of Catholic education in a common vision to share both the value and necessity of Catholic education.

Students; Parents; Family and Parishioner Engagement: GrACE 2.0

- Looking forward to how we move together
- Unifying the Catholic community and advocating for the future of Catholic education
- How might we more effectively engage both inside and outside of our Catholic education community?

'Taking Smaller Steps but Together': GrACE 2.0

- Home, School and Beyond: How can we more actively involve Parents; Families and Parishioners in our Student's education?
- Myth Busting
- Developing a series of new engagement initiatives to reach Students; Parents; Parishioners and Others
- How might we better utilize the monthly GrACE Newsletter?

Virtue and Vigilance: GrACE 2.0

- Celebrating; showcase; highlighting the faith of your Schools.

- Addressing challenges and changes to the Catholic education way of life
- Contending with many the different issues that our Students face each day
- Ensuring balance and fairness for all
- Refining our advocacy efforts via a number of new communication templates
- Expanding actions and initiatives to increase Catholic education's reach and influence

SAVE THE DATE: GrACE Summit 2024

GrACE is excited to announce that ECSD will host GrACE's 2024 Summit on Catholic Education Day, **May 09, 2024** at Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre Edmonton located at 9405 50 Street NW Edmonton. Further details to follow in the coming months.

Introducing Caij Meloche

Teacher Chaplain at St. Gabriel the Archangel School @CCSD and GrACE's new Volunteer Communications Officer

Connect with GrACE Online

Follow; repost; share; support and cheer for publicly funded Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond.

Never Miss Out!

Subscribe to GrACE's Monthly Newsletter and more: Hit the Subscribe Link at the end of this Newsletter



O Mary,
Conceived Without Sin,
Pray for Us Who Have Recourse to Thee.

Pope reaffirms right of Parents to educate their Children in freedom



Pope Francis has reiterated the need to protect the right of Parents to raise and educate their Children consistent with their convictions. They should not be constrained “in any sphere, particularly in that of schooling, to accept educational programmes contrary to their beliefs and values,” he said.

The Pope addressed participants in the General Assembly and Conference of the European Parents’ Association taking place in Rome on 10-11 November. He stressed that ‘the fundamental role of parents in the social order’ must ‘be acknowledged at every level’.

A demanding task, especially in present cultural context

Pope Francis noted that the educational mission of parents is a demanding task, especially in today’s ‘cultural context, at least in Europe, marked as it is by ethical subjectivism and practical materialism’. ‘Parents thus find themselves constantly having to show their children the goodness and reasonableness of choices and values that can no longer be taken for granted, such as the importance of marriage and the family, or the decision to accept children as a gift from God’.

Faced with these difficulties, Pope Francis highlighted the importance of ‘mutual support and encouragement, so that parents can be helped to develop a ‘passion’ for their educational mission’, which essentially amounts to teaching their children ‘what it means to be fully human’.

A vital contribution to building a ‘healthy society’

This mission ‘can be said to be successful when children come to realize the beauty of life’ and ‘grow confident and enthused about the prospect of embarking on the adventure of life’, which, said the Pope, ‘presupposes the deeper realization of God’s immense love for us’.

Indeed, ‘when we realize that at the root of our being is the unconditional love of God our Father, then we see clearly that life is good, that being born is good, and that loving is good’.

‘This is the lofty educational mission of parents: to form free and generous persons who have come to know God’s love, and to bestow freely on others what they themselves have received as a

gift’.

These are also the foundations of a ‘healthy society’. Hence the crucial role of parents in transmitting values, thus forming ‘solid citizens capable of contributing to the workplace, civic affairs, and social solidarity’.

‘Raising a child represents a genuine contribution to society’, he said, ‘because it means training a young person in sound and respectful relationships with others, a readiness to cooperate in view of a shared goal, responsibility, a sense of duty and the value of sacrifice for sake of the common good’.

‘Lacking this’, Pope Francis remarked, ‘children grow up as ‘islands,’ disconnected from others, incapable of a common vision, and accustomed to considering their own desires as absolute values. As a result, society ‘deconstructs’, grows impoverished, and is progressively weakened and dehumanized’.

Church’s commitment to support parents in their work

While insisting on the need to protect the right of parents to raise and educate their children according to their beliefs and values, Pope Francis reiterated the Church’s commitment to accompany and support families in their work and the importance of a closer collaboration with all institutions involved in education.

In this regard, he recalled the ‘Global Compact on Education’ which he launched in 2019 in order to consolidate a shared commitment on the part of all institutions that deal with young people and ‘Compact on the Family’ with cultural, academic, institutional and pastoral actors, in order to focus on the family and its various relationships.

Global Compacts on Education and on the Family

The intent of these initiatives, the Pope explained, “is to overcome a number of ‘breakdowns’ that are presently weakening the world of education: the breakdown between education and transcendence, the breakdown in interpersonal relationships, and the breakdown that distances society from the family, creating inequalities and new forms of poverty.”

Bringing his address to a close, Pope Francis encouraged the European Parents Association ‘to move forward with hope’ in its commitment, ‘drawing constant inspiration and support from the Gospel’s witness to the holy parents Mary and Joseph’.

Listen to the full report:-

[Pope reaffirms right of parents to educate their children in freedom - Vatican News](#)

St. John the Baptist comes to be the voice for Jesus. We heard his words: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.” Jesus is the straight path – if we walk his way, if we live according to his teaching and example, then Jesus will lead us home to our Father.



Students; Parents; Family and Parishioner Engagement: GrACE 2.0

Looking forward how we move together

Over the course of these last 5 years, GrACE has continuously assessed and measured the impact of its initiatives and advocacy work, using data and feedback to demonstrate our positive outcomes and also to refine our strategy.

This has included the dedication of each and every one of you in unity with the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, alongside the contribution of all Trustees; Superintendents' Educators; Clergy; Parents; Parishioners; Stakeholders and Catholic Influencers who have supported GrACE.

Your involvement continues to be instrumental in furthering the mission of Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond.

Unifying the Catholic community and advocating for the future of Catholic education

Advocating for the future of Catholic education requires a concerted effort.

Championing the commitment to reach Catholic Parents; Parishioners and Supporters, regardless of their perspectives or questions, it is essential to create an even more united effort to advocate for Catholic education and also to engage both inside and outside of our immediate Catholic Education Family.

By consistently highlighting the impact and value of Catholic education, together we all contribute to raising awareness and fostering support for the mission and values it embodies.

By amplifying the voices of the Catholic Education Family we make a significant impact in promoting the unique benefits and contributions of Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond.

How might we more effectively engage both inside and outside of our Catholic education community?

Looking forward to how we might we strengthen our connection and bridge gaps in perceptions of Catholic education, GrACE is currently developing new strategies for more effective communication with all of you; your Student bodies; Parents and Parishioners and all Catholic Stakeholders in the first instance.

But also to promote the advancement of Catholic education to include those who may not share the same sentiments about the gift of Catholic education as we do.

The aim is to create a more interconnected Catholic Education Movement to positively impact the promotion of Catholic education on a larger scale with a broader reach.

'Taking Smaller Steps but Together'

Catholic Education is going through a challenging time with the many different issues that our children are facing each day.

We are at a crucial junction where we must all join as Parents; Families and Parishioners, working with our educational partners, to put the pieces together to ensure the success of our Children's future.

How can we actively involve more Parents; Families and Parishioners in our Student's education?

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

Home, School and Beyond: How can we more actively involve Parents; Families and Parishioners in our Student's education?

Crystallizing its efforts, GrACE has begun a series of community engagement initiatives to reach Students; Parents; Parishioners and Others.

Developing a series of new engagement initiatives to reach Students; Parents; Parishioners and Others

One of the means to refine and solidify GrACE's successes thus far is to develop a number of communication blueprints to share with you in the coming weeks and months for use in your Schools and Parishes.

This is part of a renewed GrACE effort, bringing various elements together to form a cohesive and well-defined strategy.

The intention is to clarify objectives; optimize limited resources and ensure GrACE's energy is best used to bring its efforts into a sharper focus for greater effectiveness and success.

Responding to a number of home-school-parish requests, GrACE has developed a series of new engagement initiatives to:

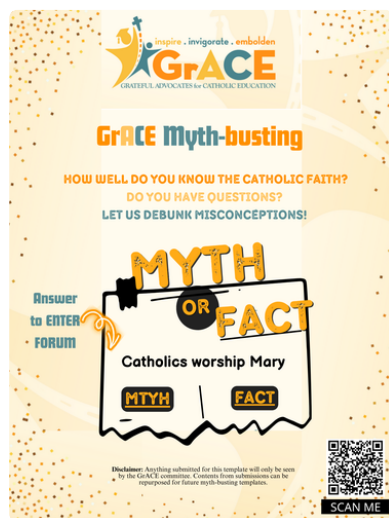
- Refine our advocacy efforts via a number of new communication templates
- Expand actions and initiatives to increase Catholic education's reach and influence

These include but are not limited to the following examples:

1. Virtue and Vigilance: GrACE 2.0

- Celebrating; showcase; highlighting the faith of your Schools.
- Addressing challenges and changes to the Catholic education way of life: Double Standards
- Contending with many the different issues that our Students face each day: Rights and Obligations
- Ensuring balance and fairness for all

Special thanks to CCSSA's Dr. Scott Morrison for the idea and to GrACE's Caij Meloche for making it happen!



By implementing the Myth Busting strategy, the intention is to both effectively counter negative messaging and strengthen support for Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond.

2. Myth Busting: GrACE 2.0.

Responding to home-school-parish requests, GrACE has been developing a [Myth Busting](#) initiative which will be shared with every School and Parish throughout Alberta and beyond in the coming months.

Special Thanks to Superintendent **Charlie Bouchard**, St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic School Division (STAR) for the idea; to Associate Superintendent **Michael Kilcommons**, Christ the Redeemer Catholic Schools who highlighted the need for more single; uniform and brand messaging; and also to Trustee, **Anne Marie Watson**, Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools for her feedback and assistance with draft templates.

Providing further resources and guidance

Strategically expanding these GrACE initiatives provides further resources and guidance in support of, not only individual Student success, but also the wide-ranging success of Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond.

Creating opportunities to reach more people while addressing challenges to Catholic education

GrACE recognizes the need to create these additional opportunities in an effort to reach more people while also addressing present challenges to Catholic education on a larger scale.

Unified Catholic education messaging

GrACE is currently working to progress unified Catholic education messaging with a number of other Catholic education organizations for every single School and Parish throughout Alberta and beyond.

Developing standardized GrACE Parish bulletin announcements

GrACE is in the process of developing standardized GrACE Parish bulletin announcements to enrol Parishioners throughout Alberta and beyond to make a stand for Catholic education.

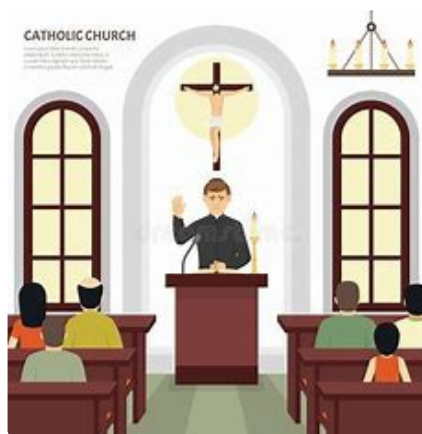
GrACE has increased its direct engagement with Parishioners and a wider audience at Parish level to include newcomers to Canada.

GrACE hosts Q&A sessions and delivers presentations in local Parishes in an effort to enrol every person in our Church pews. This happens in person or via Zoom

Please contact me at gracedirector7@gmail.com if you wish to GrACE's assistance in your Parish to welcome new immigrants to publicly funded Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond.

Or if you wish GrACE to support any other local Parish Committee; CWL or Knights of Columbus monthly meetings.

Alternatively, please contact me to share GrACE resources that can be used by you in your Parish sessions.



Salve Regina

Let us pray the Rosary, alongside the following Unity Prayer for harmony and unity in our work together to advance Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond:

My adorable Jesus, May our feet journey together. May our hands gather in unity. May our hearts beat in unison. May our souls be in harmony. May our thoughts be as one. May our ears listen to the silence together. May our glances profoundly penetrate each other. May our lips pray together to gain mercy from the Eternal Father.



The Gift of public funded Catholic Education



In unity with the Bishops of Alberta, Trustees, Superintendents, Educators, Clergy, Parents, Parishioners, Stakeholders and Catholic Influencers, Catholic education integrates faith and academic development, encouraging Students to reach their full potential as individuals created in the image of God.

Thanks to public funding of Catholic schools throughout Alberta and beyond more than 183,500 Students at more than 450 Catholic Schools from diverse backgrounds in 19 Catholic School Districts and 4 Francophone Boards receive an excellent education in a supportive environment.

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

We celebrate how Catholic schools enrich our parishes, our communities and our province in so many ways. Questions to consider:-

- How would your community be different without publicly-funded Catholic schools?
- How can I help Catholic education thrive throughout Alberta and beyond?

To that end, GrACE is currently updating PowerPoint presentations and historical educational information around the history of Catholic education in Alberta to provide further knowledge to anyone wishing to make a difference by supporting publicly funded Catholic Education throughout Alberta and beyond.

The long term goal of this exercise - when completed - is education of the electorate to vote for continued fully publicly funded Catholic Schools.



The importance of Catholic Education



‘The individual’s story is the curriculum and in Catholic education if each student can be valued for who they are and their God-given gifts they learn, thrive and find their place in the world. This is at the crux of our praxis in Catholic education, where we can assist individuals to see their own personal story in the light of THE story, coming to understand how their own lives are significant in the weaving together of all our stories’.

(Institute for Catholic Education, Curriculum Still Matters: A Resource for Catholic Educators, pg. 7)

The Catholic identity is recognized and protected both by section 93 of our Canadian Constitution

‘The Catholic identity is recognized and protected both by section 93 of our Canadian Constitution – for without recognition of that identity the agreement that created Canada would not have proceeded – but also by the Education Act. Both the constitution and the Education Act make it clear that the Catholic identity of the school must be respected’.



Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto

Catholics have denominational rights when it comes to Schools that trumps any Provincial or Territorial Human Rights legislation

Catholics have denominational rights when it comes to Schools that trumps and supercedes any Provincial or Territorial Human Rights legislation.

Catholic School Boards have the power to reject any Federal or Provincial law; regulation or Human Rights code directive that contradicts the content of our Catholic faith and morals.

We must all find a way to express ourselves, especially on issues of disagreement.

How can we exercise our Rights?

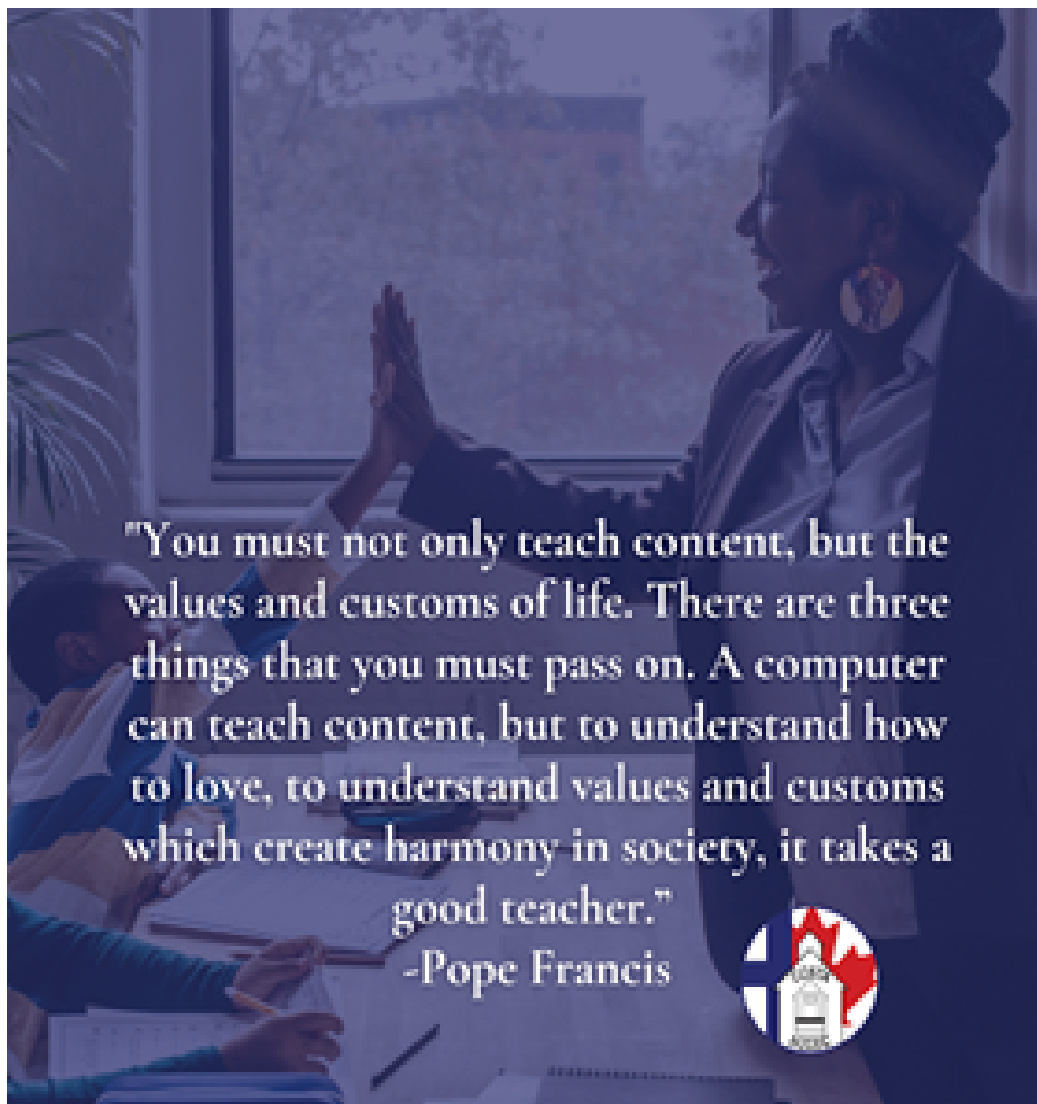
Recently, GrACE has received an increasing number of requests from Trustees for information that can be used to help attract; elect and situate potential new Trustees to include a Voter's guide that eligible voters can use as part of their candidate research.



Ideally, in partnership with ACSTA and other stakeholder organizations, GrACE is inspired to develop a body of work and a concerted response to Trustee requests to mobilize, not just these eligible voters, but also all of those Catholics in our Church pews who have Children in our Catholic Schools or who have had Children who have graduated.

In addition, that is, to those non-practicing Catholics; non-Catholics who send their Children to Catholic Schools and indeed Others who wish - for whatever reason - that our Catholic Schools remain separate.

The initiative - affirming the values, principles and spiritual foundation that Catholic Schools are built upon to ensure continued success and impact - of course, can be further developed in advance of future Municipal; Territorial and Federal elections as well.



"You must not only teach content, but the values and customs of life. There are three things that you must pass on. A computer can teach content, but to understand how to love, to understand values and customs which create harmony in society, it takes a good teacher."
-Pope Francis



Technology can do many things but replacing the value of a Teacher – with a mission to love as Christ loves – isn't one of them.

Let us pray for our incredible Catholic Educators and Teachers throughout Alberta and beyond who are forming Students in love and truth!

Let's celebrate Catholic Schools and 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.

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

There are so many positive stories about Catholic Schools and Education in Alberta.

Catholic Education refers to educational institutions and programmes run by the Catholic faith which includes Schools: Colleges and Universities and all of whom are known for their

commitment to delivering academic excellence while emphasizing the values and teachings of the Catholic Church.

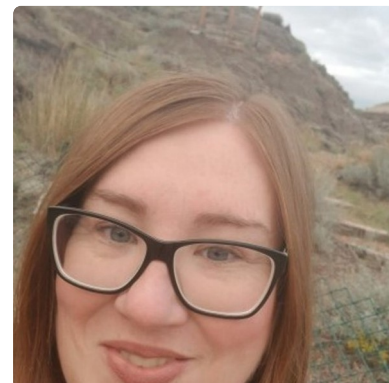
Highlight the faith of your School

As a GrACE Advocate and Leader in our Catholic education system, celebrate; showcase; highlight the faith of your School.

Courage to Lead: Stacey MacNeil-Ayeh

Alberta Catholic Education Curriculum Resource Coordinator (ACE CRC), Stacey MacNeil-Ayeh

In 2020, CCSSA created an Alberta Catholic Education Curriculum Resource Coordinator (ACE CRC) position to coordinate and develop resources and implementation strategies for religious studies programs across all Catholic school divisions throughout Alberta.



Stacey MacNeil-Ayeh has since successfully filled that role, working closely alongside the Executive Director of CCSSA, Scott Morrison, the Religious Education Network (REN), and the Alberta Catholic Education Resource Advisory Committee (ACERAC).

Stacey talks of her 'constant awe of the passion, dedication, and advocacy of all partners in Catholic Education working to create inclusive and welcoming Catholic schools in the province.

It is remarkable to witness the commitment to permeating the curriculum and culture of the schools with the teachings of Jesus Christ."

The position includes opportunities to partner with school divisions on professional development, faith formation, and creating implementation supports for curriculum.

Additionally, Stacey continues to work on numerous other projects from her portfolio, including but not limited to LIFE Framework Training, coordinating professional development for faith formation, creating resources to support the Health and Wellness Curriculum, and consulting on resources for grade nine religious' studies.

Stacey would like to acknowledge her REN colleagues who continually answer the call to form working subcommittees to create valuable resources for the classroom to support teachers across the province.

In her efforts to support Teachers, Students, and stakeholders, Stacey's love for Catholic Education is unmistakable.

At every turn, Stacey champions the teachings and rich traditions of the Catholic Church. Stacey shared, "I am so blessed to do this work that brings me across Alberta, including the Northwest Territories and Saskatchewan. Every day,

I meet passionate Catholic educators who passionately love the students in their care, creating opportunities to learn about the church's teachings and for them to know Jesus'.

Working alongside in admiration of Stacey, the GrACE team experiences her love of all things Catholic, community and service to Catholic Education throughout Alberta and beyond.



Bruce Gal, Associate Principal and Athletic Director St. Joseph School, Coaldale, Alberta shares the story of his Schools ambition to build a school of kindness where 'the idea of "Building a School of Kindness" came from discussions that we had in our junior high leadership class.

As a class, we talked about our faith plan for this year which revolves around the idea of "Build".

Last year, our faith plan for the division asked staff and students to "Arise". Everyone was encouraged to try new things, be involved

This year, as we discussed the theme of build, we talked about what “build” looks like in our school? What can we do to create a school that everyone wants to be a part of?

As we discussed this, we kept coming back to the word, “kindness”. We felt that kindness embodies so many things we would like to build our school around. Being kind means being inclusive, accepting, understanding of others and building people up so they can achieve their potential.

The students, with the help of guidance from the teachers, decided that a visual representation of a school of kindness could involve all students in the school and serve as a reminder of what we want our school to be based on.

Once we came up with this idea, the students went to work. They began drawing a large paper cut out of a school and prominently displayed it in our gathering space.

Displaying this in our gathering space was important to us, as it is a space that all students in the school use throughout the week and so every student will see the model of our school of kindness.

It is also an area where visitors coming into our school inevitably pass by. We felt that this was a great way to welcome others as they enter our school.

Once it was fixed to the wall, the students then began to cut out paper bricks and labelled each of the bricks with every student's name in the school, all the way from our Early Learning Program to the grade 9 class.

Then, each homeroom teacher received the bricks, one for each of their students. Instructions were given to pass the bricks out to the class, ensuring that no student gets their own name.

Once the bricks were distributed, students then wrote a kind message about the person whose brick they received.

With Christmas approaching and the hectic pace of the season, I did not give teachers/classes a timeline to have their bricks finished, being aware to not pile on any extra work. I was thinking that this might be something that we could start in the new year.

To my surprise as soon as the first class handed in their bricks and the students started affixing them to the school, that is building our school of kindness, more and more bricks started coming in.

Elementary teachers began to bring their classes down to the gathering space to discuss the school of kindness and read the messages on the bricks.

Within less than two weeks all of the classes had returned their bricks and all students were now part of our school of kindness.

As you can see from the picture of the school, there is still room for more bricks. As we continue on with this year, we will continue to add bricks of kindness to the school as a reminder to all that

Connect with GrACE Online

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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!

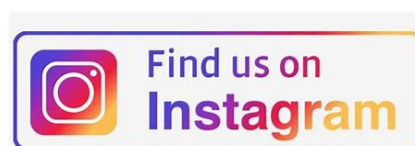
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GrACE Facebook address is www.facebook.com/GrACE4cathed

Grace email is gracedirector7@gmail.com

GrACE Twitter address is [@GrACE4cathed](https://twitter.com/GrACE4cathed)

Instagram: [@grace4catholiceducation](https://www.instagram.com/grace4catholiceducation)



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
-

SAVE THE DATE!

GrACE Summit 2024

GrACE is excited to announce that ECSD will host GrACE's 2024 Summit on Catholic Education Day, **May 09, 2024** at Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre Edmonton located at 9405 50 Street NW Edmonton.

The GrACE Family looks forward to a wonderful day of strengthening the Catholic education community; making new connections and sharing the gift of Catholic education.

The aim is to celebrate Catholic education's rich past while we set the stage for its future.

We come together to collectively celebrate Catholic education and to ensure for future Families this choice.

We give thanks for Catholic education, which from the earliest days of Alberta has been an integral part of the educational system and unite Parents, Parishioners, Educators and Others in the shared goal of preserving and enhancing Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond.

Notably, ECSD now celebrates 135 years of providing exceptional Catholic education to families in Edmonton with 94 schools teaching more than 47,000 students

Further details to follow in the coming months.

Please feel free to share your 'save the date' and highlight your own events in GrACE's Monthly Newsletters

GrACE Says Thank You



Michelle Collette
Volunteer GrACE Treasurer



Jolyne deMarco
*Volunteer GrACE Instagram
Administrator*



Grant Gay
*Volunteer GrACE Facebook
Administrator*

Introducing Caij Meloche, GrACE's new Volunteer Communications Officer

Happy New Year, Catholic Education Colleagues!

I am Caij Meloche, a Teacher Chaplain at St. Gabriel the Archangel School located in Chestermere through the Calgary Catholic School District.

I am passionate about living a Christ-centered life and sharing my testimony with others.

My hobbies include playing music, creating art, and being active.

I will be serving the GrACE community through my new role as Communications Officer starting January 2024.

I started my journey with Catholic Education in the Christ the Redeemer School District as a student, graduating High School from Holy Trinity Academy in Okotoks.

I strengthened my relationship with God while completing a Bachelor of Education at St. Mary's University which led to working for the Calgary Catholic School District.

I love to use the gifts God has given me to grow within my community whenever possible. I am and have previously been involved in many committees that advocate for social justice through a faith focused approach.

In my role as GrACE's volunteer Communications Officer, I will be combining my passion for Catholicity, social justice and leadership.



Stay tuned for interviews, forums and solutions to issues and misconceptions that people have or are experiencing within the Catholic education system. These interviews will include parishioners, parents, students, and educators.

Being a proud Metis woman, in association with Metis nation region 3, I have a special place in my heart for how the Indigenous and Catholic world views align.

Therefore, I will be reaching out to Catholic Indigenous individuals to shine a light on their Catholic education experience, providing GrACE with further opportunities to contribute to Canada's truth and reconciliation process.

In the meantime, as a reminder, please also find the following link to GrACE's previous involvement at the Braiding Together Conference October 13-14, 2023 and GrACE's Newsletter: [Dialogue Towards Truth and Reconciliation](#).

God bless,

Caij Meloche

Volunteer Communications Officer, GrACE



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 we 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 to express interest and suggestions.

Catholic Education Prayer of the Faithful for February 2024

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.
 - For protection and graces during this time of Pandemic, we pray to the Lord.
 - That our Catholic Schools may reveal the glory of God in all that they do, we pray to the Lord.
 - That our Catholic Schools may nurture the growth of wisdom and virtue in the young, we pray to the Lord.
 - For Catholic Educators and School Staff called to live a life of love and sacrifice, we pray to the Lord.
-

Council of a Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA) Corner

CCSSA'S Catholic Leadership Conference returns in September 2024

The CCSSA sponsors a Catholic Leadership conference aimed at the faith formation of Catholic administrators every two years. The conference committee is chaired by Laurie Kardynal (Assistant Superintendent, STAR Catholic). The theme for the September 2024 conference is *Marked By God: Formed by Faith*. Aligned with the CCSSA's Annual Assurance Plan, the conference will focus on the four areas of Catholic formation: Spiritual, Human, Pastoral, and Intellectual. The Conference Committee plans to draw on the wisdom and experience of our members by initiating a call for interest for presenters from within the CCSSA. We expect to have over 300 senior and site-based Catholic leaders at the Conference.

Ash Wednesday and Valentine Day

The CCSSA Board of Directors was asked to consider the issue of Ash Wednesday falling on February 14 (Valentines Day) in 2024. The Board considered a recommendation on this issue, which brought to the table through Archbishop Smith, the Education Liaison Bishop. The Board's decision was to recommend that Superintendents consider advising their principals/schools to celebrate Valentine's day on February 13 to ensure Ash Wednesday is observed as it should be.

CCSSA Board of Directors to discuss Catholic Education Sunday and Catholic Education Week

At its upcoming meeting on January 31, 2024, the CCSSA Board of Directors will discuss the pros and cons of combining Catholic Education Sunday, which is typically held in the fall, and Catholic Education Week, which is typically held in the spring. This item is being brought to the table for discernment through the Archbishop Smith, the Education Liaison Bishop. The concern about having two separate events is that they are somewhat duplicative, meaning they also tend to dilute one another. It may be wise to have one celebration. If the Board agrees this might be a good idea, we will ask our fraternal partners (the ACSTA, the Alberta Bishops, Grace) for their views, as this is certainly a change that would need to be supported by all the partners.

Catholic School Districts' Publications

- [Calgary Catholic Schools](#)
- [Redeemer Revelations](#)

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.



One of Archbishop Smith's favorite saints

Join Archbishop Smith for a discussion about why the Catholic Church canonizes saints, the heroic story of St. Josephine Bakhita, how the grace of God can transform trauma and abuse into healing and forgiveness, and how we can bring heroic forgiveness into our own lives.

[Click here.](#)

Vocation Crisis

Join Archbishop Smith and Dr. Ryan Topping (Benedict XVI Institute, Newman Theological College) for a discussion about the state of vocations in the Church, the brand-new study that Dr. Topping has published after surveying young priests from across Canada, the impact of altar serving on young boys, parents as the first vocation directors and much more.



Prayer for Vocations

Holy St. John Vianney,

I honor the righteous life you lived. I am grateful for your example of how to be a righteous follower of Jesus Christ.

I pray now that you will ask God to send his power to all serving in holy vocations. Teach them how to follow God and serve His children.

Teach them how to listen to the promptings of the spirit so they will lead righteously and courageously.

Help the congregation listen to the words they preach. Help them feel enlightened and prompted to enrich their lives with the word of God.

I pray that these people serving in holy vocations will know the needs of the people they serve.

Help God send angels to assist these servants in God's kingdom.

Help extend their power and reach so that they can serve as many of God's children as possible. Bless the people being served that they will be receptive to the good news of Jesus Christ. I pray that You will help God's church spread on Earth. Help it reach people who are willing to hear it. I humbly offer this prayer in Jesus Christ's name,.Amen

Pro-Life Prayer

Father and maker of all, you adorn all creation with splendor and beauty, and fashion human lives in your image and likeness. Awaken in every heart reverence for the work of your hands, and renew among your people a readiness to nurture and sustain your precious gift of life. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen

Throughout Alberta and beyond

St. Mary's Parish in Brooks is on the road to #Renewal

After a thoughtful review of the diocesan synodal synthesis in 2022, St. Mary's Parish in Brooks embarked on a mission of rejuvenation. A dedicated group of 24 parishioners rose to the challenge, coming together in prayer and discussion to explore avenues of renewal. Want to know more about their journey and what they decided to kick off their parish renewal marathon with? [Read more](#)



Social Media Posts

Holy Spirit Catholic School Division

Thanks to Mrs. Urquhart, Holy Spirit's French and International Education Consultant.

This January over 900 French Students at Holy Spirit Catholic School Division celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany.





Later in the January 2024, Holy Spirit held its first Mental Health Parent Night Learning Session of 2021 to address Resiliency and Self Care.

<https://surveymonkey.com/r/7R9L8CC> #IBelieveInCatholicEd #MentalHealth #hs4



Holy Spirit Catholic Division
Presents:



Billy Woitte
ESWAG
Intelligence Services | Wellness Services | Health
Holy Spirit Catholic School Division
www.hscatholic.ca
(403) 932-1000



Emily Williston
SWAG
Intelligence Services | Wellness Services | Health
Holy Spirit Catholic School Division
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(403) 932-1000

Resiliency & Self-Care

January 16th, 5:30 pm
Essie's Ballroom
Sandman Signature, 320
Scenic Drive S., Lethbridge Ab

Join us as Lethbridge Family Services will present for a night of learning and good (free) food!

Please RSVP at
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7R9L8CC>



Lethbridge Family Services

Lethbridge Family Services provides highly-accredited health and social services to over 9,000 individuals and families in more than 30 communities in southwestern Alberta. The Outreach and Education team works with individuals, caregivers and professional to facilitate insight, awareness and enhance skills.

This is a FREE event.

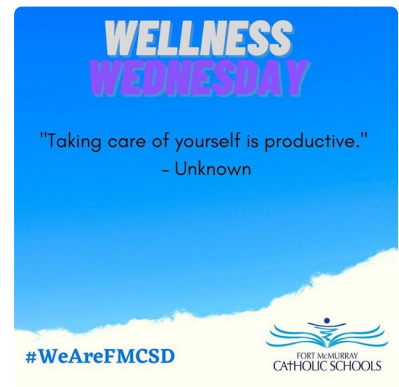
Intended audience: parents, guardians, caregivers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, childcare providers, all school staff, bus drivers, parishioner's

Please RSVP at
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7R9L8CC>



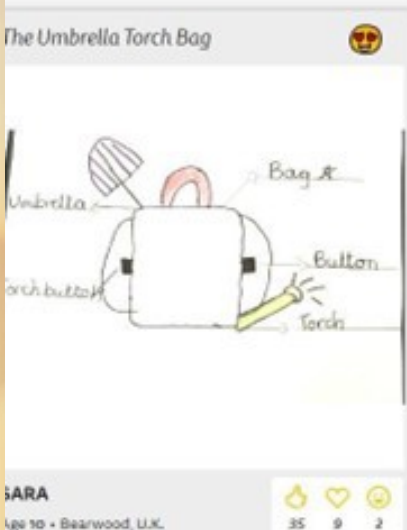
Fort Mc Murray Catholic School Division

At Fort Mc Murray Catholic School Division highlighted Wellness Wednesday, alongside an incredible team of Counsellors and a website full of great resources: <https://bit.ly/39HONMu>



Calgary Catholic School District

Mrs Perry, Elementary Social Studies Consultant @ccsd.edu provides us with inspiration and tweets about Kids Inventor Day!



Putting a Face on Alberta's Past an Alberta-wide Student Contest

ALBERTA CHAMPIONS

Deadline: April 22, 2024

Enter your essay, story, poem, video,
animation, interactive game, or other media
Two Divisions: **Grades 4-6 | Grades 7-9**

Our 15th annual contest connects Alberta
students with important Alberta pioneers,
founders, builders, innovators and
Indigenous leaders; as well as their impact
on today's important social issues.

The contest aligns with the curriculum for English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies



For entry details and rules, see
[Alberta Champions.org](https://albertachampions.org)

pictured: Bar U Ranch National Historic Site

Highlighted Events



VOCATIONS RALLY

ALL HANDS ON DECK

Friday, Feb 2, 2024 | 6:30 - 8:30 PM

St. Joseph's Basilica, O'Leary Hall

VOCATIONS RALLY - All Hands on Deck

Tickets Still Available!

Join the Archdiocesan Vocations Rally on **February 2, 2024**

Use code "Vocations" for 50% off single tickets or "Rally" for \$10 off family tickets.

Get your tickets from the link below and read about the recent report on newly ordained priesthood in Canada.

[CLICK HERE](#)

When?

Friday, Feb 2, 2024, 06:30 PM

Where?

St. Joseph's Basilica, 113 Street, Edmonton, AB, Canada

Newman Theological College
and the Archdiocese of Edmonton Present

ADOREMUS & CREDO

Event Information

ADOREMUS ("Let Us Adore")

Join other young adults on the first Saturday of each month for Eucharistic Adoration. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available and music will be provided by Schola Cantorum.

The next one is on **Feb 3, 2024** from **7:00 PM to 8:30 PM**

When?

Saturday, Feb 3, 2024, 07:00 p.m.

Where?

Newman Theological College, 84 Street Northwest, Edmonton, AB, Canada

What's Wrong with MAiD? An Invitation from Dcn. Larry Worthen - February 08, 2024

Few people could have anticipated the full implications of legalizing euthanasia in Canada. Seven years later, there are growing concerns about its expansion, the lack of protections for people experiencing vulnerability, and the long-term effects on the ethics of the medical system. As Catholics, we uphold the dignity of all human life, from conception to natural death. We believe that every single life matters.

Deacon Larry Worthen is the executive director of the Christian Medical and Dental Association. He will be in Edmonton February 08, 2024 for a public event as part of Hope & Dignity: A Catholic Response to Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, a pastoral initiative to equip Catholics to be effective witnesses in their families, parishes and communities

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

What's Wrong with "MAiD"?

(Medical Assistance in Dying)

Thursday, February 8, 7:00 pm
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Parish
13 Brauer Drive, Sherwood Park

Join us for Mass at 6:15, celebrated by Rev. Jim Corrigan.
The live event can also be viewed on YouTube.
@olhp/parish/asherwoodparkab.streams

Presented by: Deacon Larry Worthen, Executive Director
Christian Medical and Dental Association of Canada
Special Guest: Archbishop Richard Smith

In this important presentation, Deacon Larry Worthen will review the evolution of euthanasia policy in Canada and propose the role Catholics can play in restoring the value of every human life.

Presented by: The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, GIFT, OLPHA

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

Keynote Speaker

DEACON LARRY WORTHEN

Catholic lawyer and longtime advocate for opposing Medical Assistance in Dying

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

Come learn how to articulate the evil of assisted suicide, how to approach this matter with truth and compassion, and how to advocate for change.

G **GrACE Executive Director**
GrACE is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters

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