

GrACE Newsletter

June 2024

Message from the GrACE Executive Director



Dear GrACE Apostles,

The key to our success as a Catholic Education Movement – just like the emphasis and pattern of the early Church – is participation and encouragement; support and outreach to anyone and everyone that we can enrol in our cause.

The early Church thrived on active participation. Believers were not mere spectators; they engaged fully in worship, community

life, and evangelization.

Catholic Education is Evangelization:

Catholic schools play a crucial role in the Church's evangelizing mission by bringing the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

They are particularly significant as places of evangelization for our young people. Throughout history, Catholic education has moulded our students in their Christian life and their future salvation. This has involved active participation in the sacraments and the knowledge and truth of the Catholic faith.

The Call to Lead:

The Church encourages all of us as Catholics, alongside our educational leaders, to see our role as mission-focused vocations in service to Christ and families. We all have a role to play in strengthening our Catholic identity; building a Catholic culture; fostering faith development; and integrating Church traditions and doctrinal practices.

Answering the Call: Communion of Catholics:

We need to pray for Catholic education, but also to take action to defend it. The call goes beyond our Catholic educators to each and every Catholic to uphold and advance the mission of Catholic education. God choses the unlikely—just as he did his first Disciples – to spread the Good News. We too are called to make a stand for Catholic education.

In support of Catholic education throughout Alberta and beyond, we Catholics have unity, a purpose and an urgency to lead with courage and faith. We must be driven from the ground up with grassroot support grounded in prayer and the desire to fulfill God's will for us.

As Jesus said to Peter and Andrew, 'put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch' (Luke 5.4), no-one is on his/her own.

Rooted in our Catholic beliefs and safe and secure in God's love and our Catholic faith, we each have a contribution to make.

Blessings and much love.

'Jesus, I trust in You'!

Kate

Executive Director | GrACE

E: gracedirector7@gmail.com



- 1. Inspired by love of the Father, faith in Jesus Christ, hope from the Holy Spirit.
- Driven by a vision that acknowledges all people have an inherent dignity as children of God.
- Visible and tangible Catholic vision evident in its physical space, liturgical celebrations, and prayer life.
- Animated by a Catholic faith infused curriculum that integrates a vision of faith within the learner outcomes and teaching strategies.
- Cultivates a school community that gives living witness to the Gospel and teachings of Christ as exemplars of discipleship.
- 6. Nurtures a life long relationship with Christ as role model and inspiration.
- Respects the rights of parents as the primary educators of their children and strives to work collaboratively and respectfully with all stakeholders.
- Founded on Core values of dignity and respect, honesty, loyalty, fairness, and personal and communal growth.
- Fosters an inclusive community of learners founded on principles of hospitality, tradition, justice, sacramentality, and spirituality.
- Provides a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and Catholic environment that is inspired by the Holy Spirit as a community of compassionate hope.
- Serves the diverse needs of every child, regardless of circumstance and believes in their potential to develop their gifts and talents.
- Animated by the vision that all students will learn together, work together and pray together in answering the call to a faith-filled life of service.

Inside the June

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".

Let's celebrate Catholic schools and Catholic education!

SAVE THE DATE: GrACE Summit 2024

GrACE is excited to announce that Calgary Catholic School District will host GrACE's 2024 Fall Summit during Catholic Education Week, on **Friday, October 25th, 2024.** Further details will follow.

Connect with GrACE Online

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

Never Miss Out!

Hit the Subscribe Link at the end of this newsletter to receive GrACE's monthly newsletter and more.

New Website & Integrated Social Media

GrACE recently began work on its new website and integrated social media platform.

We will complete the main work over the summer months, ideally in time for the beginning of the new school year in September 2024.

Our monthly newsletters will be streamlined to highlight key events and achievements. We aim to address ongoing questions and requests for information through the website and social media.







A new GrACE website will significantly enhance GrACE's online presence and serve as a central hub for information, resources, and community engagement.

Integrating GrACE's social media platforms will allow GrACE to reach a wider audience, share updates, and foster meaningful interactions.

UNITE---ENGAGE---EDUCATE---COMMUNICATE!



GrACE fuels a Catholic education movement that champions Catholic education, modelling the Catholic faith, while celebrating the uniqueness of Catholic Schools.

GrACE gathers trustees, Catholic education supporters, teachers, administrators, religious education consultants, parents,

parishioners, Catholic bishops and parish priests from Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon to ensure that Catholic education not only survives but thrives.

GrACE **unites**, **engages**, **educates**, and **communicates** with one amplified voice to champion Catholic education.

The inclusion of trustees, teachers, administrators, consultants, parents, parishioners, bishops, and clergy both underscores the breadth and depth of GrACE's engagement in the mission of

Catholic education and ensures that various perspectives are represented as we reflect on Catholic education and strategize.

GrACE strengthens the **home—school—parish** relationship, fostering a sense of shared responsibility to ensure collective commitment to the cause of Catholic education.

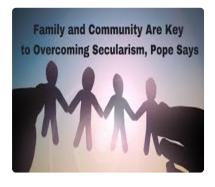
GrACE leads Catholics in prayer for Catholic education through novenas, weekly and monthly prayer resources. GrACE also promotes Catholic Education Week and Catholic Education Sunday initiatives.



Save The Date!

Catholic Education Sunday & Catholic Education Week Sunday, October 20 – Friday, October 25, 2024

The Next GrACE Summit, October 25, 2024



The Next GrACE Summit, October 25, 2024

Catholic Education Sunday in Alberta will take place on the third Sunday of October — October 20, 2024 — with Catholic Education Week to follow.

The first of 2024's two GrACE Summits, on May 10, 2024, gathered approximately 170 Catholic school trustees, Catholic education supporters, teachers, administrators, religious education consultants, parents, parishioners, Catholic bishops and parish priests from across Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon to reflect on Catholic education and to strategize.

The Summit facilitated the sharing of insights, best practices, and challenges faced within the realm of Catholic education. Among attendees, a sense of community and solidarity were fostered; this reflected the breadth and depth of GrACE's engagement in the mission of Catholic education.

Two action questions resulted:

- 1. How might we lead courageously in support of Catholic education?
- 2. How can GrACE in unity with our Catholic Bishops, ACSTA, and CCSSA continue to build a Catholic education movement throughout Alberta and beyond?

Plans are underway for the next GrACE Summit, October 25, 2024, with a Home-School-Parish theme.

The goal is to integrate support and advocacy for Catholic education with parish/diocesan renewal.

There is keen interest among parishioners and the local GrACE Committee to actively participate and share their insights at the upcoming GrACE Summit in October 2024.

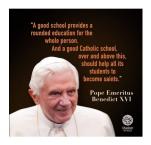


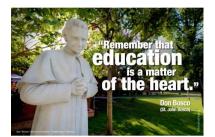
Catholic schools nurture faith and values in students.

Catholic schools provide an environment where faith, values, and education intersect, nurturing the Catholic identity and spiritual growth of young individuals!

Catholic schools are pivotal in fostering faith and values in students:

- Integration of Faith and Reason: Catholic schools serve as a beacon of faith, offering a comprehensive education that nurtures both intellect and spirit. In contrast to secular institutions, Catholic education encompasses more than just imparting knowledge.
- **Teaching Catholic Values**: Opting for a Catholic school can significantly influence your child's spiritual and intellectual growth. These schools provide an education rooted in faith, weaving religious principles throughout the curriculum.
- **Promoting Prayer and Worship**: A critical element of Catholic upbringing and education is the encouragement of prayer and worship in both home and school settings. This cultivates a culture of prayer, helping children form a personal bond with God.
- **Developing Morality and Virtue**: Through Catholic upbringing and education, children are guided to cultivate a robust moral framework and virtues.





First World Children's Day, 2024 | Francis

Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the First World Children's Day, 2024

☑ t.co



Stand firm for Catholic rights in Canada's increasingly secular society.

As Canada becomes more diverse and secular, it raises important questions about how to balance the rights of individuals to practice their religion freely with the principles of secularism and the

rights of others.

- As Catholics, we have the right to hold and practice our religious beliefs, including the freedom to worship, practice our faith, and manifest our beliefs in both private and public settings.
- In Canada, there is a principle of separating religion from the affairs of the state. This principle ensures that our government remains neutral and treats all religious and non-religious groups equally.
- In Canadian society, we uphold principles of non-discrimination and equality. As Catholics, therefore, we ought not face discrimination or disadvantage based on our beliefs, and we should be treated with fairness and respect regardless of our Catholic faith.
- This means finding ways to respect and accommodate religious beliefs and practices where possible.
- It is important to foster understanding, tolerance, and empathy among individuals with different beliefs, as well as between religious and non-religious communities. This can help build bridges, reduce prejudice, and promote peaceful coexistence.

We must all find ways to express ourselves, especially on issues where we disagree.



Let's celebrate Catholic Schools & Catholic Education!

We are grateful for publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta, a unique and cherished historical gift. 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, Catholic schools, colleges, and universities; programs rooted in the Catholic faith; and the work of all who are known for their commitment to

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



Highlight the Faith of your School!



As a grateful advocate for Catholic education and leader in our Catholic education system, celebrate, showcase, and highlight the faith of your school.



JUNE: EDMONTON CATHOLIC



On April 25, 2024, Edmonton Catholic Schools staff spent the afternoon extending their service beyond their schools and sites to serve the greater community. Grace for the Heart and Soul is an annual event for the Division, creating opportunities for staff to embody the "hands and feet of Jessi" on Earth. Together, and through various acts of service, schools and sites worked to strengthen their commitment to community and foster meaningful relationships essential to our mission to provide a Catholic education that inspires students to learn and that prepares them to live fully and to serve God in one another. Examples of community-serving initiatives include visiting residents at a seniors centre, volunteering at the food bank to help sort donations, and picking up litter. Staff also collected and sorted toiletries for those in need, donated their time to the Catholic Social Services Carca-Avan Program, which reaches out to vulnerable populations in Edmonton's outer-city areas, and assisted in cleaning pews at their neighbourhood parish. Through these activities, ECSD staff are living out their faith in meaningful ways that positively impact the wider community.





SHARE SOMETHING WONDERFUL FROM YOUR SCHOOL

SELECT SCHOOL BOARDS WILL BE FEATURED BY GRACE EACH MONTH

JUNE: EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



On April 25, 2024, Edmonton Catholic Schools staff spent the afternoon extending their service beyond their schools and sites to serve the greater community. Grace for the Heart and Soul is an annual event for the Division, creating opportunities for staff to embody the "hands and feet of Jesus" on Earth. Together, and through various acts of service, schools and sites worked to strengthen their commitment to community and foster meaningful relationships essential to our mission to provide a Catholic education that inspires students to learn and that prepares them to live fully and to serve God in one another. Examples of community-serving initiatives include visiting residents at a seniors centre, volunteering at the food bank to help sort donations, and picking up litter. Staff also collected and sorted toiletries for those in need, donated their time to the Catholic Social Services Care-a-Van Program, which reaches out to vulnerable populations in Edmonton's outer-city areas, and assisted in cleaning pews at their neighbourhood parish. Through these activities ECSD staff are living out their faith in meaningful ways that positively impact the wider community.

Where Are They Now?



Connect with GrACE Online

Follow, repost, share, support, and cheer for publicly funded Catholic education!

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 of Catholic education! @GrACE4cathed

 ${\tt GrACE\ Facebook\ address\ is\ \underline{www.facebook.com/GrACE4cathed}}$

Grace email is gracedirector7@gmail.com

GrACE Twitter address is @GrACE4cathed

Instagram: @grace4catholiceducation







Help us Celebrate Catholic Education!

Assist GrACE:

- Sign up for GrACE's monthly newsletter
- · Share GrACE's monthly Newsletter
- Celebrate Catholic schools and Catholic education
- Provide information to share in GrACE's monthly newsletter
- Tell your positive stories and benefits from your Catholic school(s) and Catholic education
- Subscribe to GrACE's Facebook; Twitter (X), and social media pages
- Encourage parents to become more actively involved in GrACE
- Support local GrACE group 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 Catholic education in Alberta and beyond
- Assert your choice in favour of Catholic schools/Catholic education and its values
- Champion the benefits of Catholic schools and Catholic education, alongside its broader implications for the spiritual, intellectual, and social development of individuals and society as a whole
- Be active in the GrACE movement
- Post your pictures and tag us so we can share them and celebrate too

Reconciliation Corner



GrACE chats with Dr. Linda Dudar

Upon meeting Dr. Linda Dudar at STMU for our interview, I immediately noticed how she brightens a room. Her musical talents are indeed captivating, but it was her warm, positive personality that truly drew people in. That Wednesday, Bishop McGrattan presided over Mass in a crowded McGivney Hall filled with parishioners. Linda is a leader with many facets. Not only did she lead the music ministry at Mass, but she also engaged with staff, students, and community members alike. Dr. Dudar is well-acquainted with the STMU campus, having served as its Dean of Education for eight years following the completion of her PhD at



the University of Calgary. Her academic credentials include a Bachelor of Education in Music Education from Brandon University and a Master of Arts in Administration and Curriculum from Gonzaga University in Washington. With over 25 years as a principal, administrator, and teacher, she brings more than two decades of leadership experience in K-12 education across both Catholic and public schools. Linda is known for seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit in her decision making. She confided to GrACE that, despite initial hesitations about changing her leadership role, she accepted the position, believing that "when God wants you to do something, He does not let go!".

Throughout her tenure at STMU, Linda deepened her understanding of Indigenous knowledge. She fondly remembers collaborating with Elders from nearby communities. For instance, as the Chair of the Deans of Education in Alberta, her inaugural dean's meeting at STMU was noteworthy. It included all department heads, but Linda realized that key leaders were absent. Consequently, Elders were invited to provide their perspectives. A memorable experience for Linda at STMU was the privilege of working with Indigenous Elders in Calgary. She reminisces about an Elder imparting



a profound lesson about the hummingbird. Nature continuously offers us wisdom; we need only to observe and listen to the lessons our surroundings offer. The narrative concluded with the hummingbird's message: "I do what I can, and continue." Linda's animated expression when sharing this story with GrACE highlighted the enduring impact of storytelling.

Linda's journey at STMU was marked by numerous enlightening experiences. She recounts a retreat to Ghost River, where the staff and faculty spent a week. There, she was amazed by the connection she forged with the land. Linda described to GrACE a particular activity called "get to know your tree," which profoundly moved her and enhanced her bond with nature. Participants were blindfolded and later had to locate their tree. This exercise underscored the clear link between Indigenous way of knowing focused on building a relationship with the earth and the Catholic connection to the divine. Linda summarized this with the words, "He is guiding you."

Though she is now retired, Linda's pace remains undiminished. She has conducted professional development sessions across Alberta, Canada, the United States, England, Taiwan, and Ukraine since her retirement. As a guest presenter at the World Congress of Special Education in Philadelphia, Linda conveyed to GrACE her belief that the Holy Spirit guided her to consultancy work focusing on



leadership development for individuals and small groups. Linda serves on eight boards, leading with conviction in roles such as the Board of Directors for the Canada-Ukraine Foundation, the Calgary Interfaith Council, and as the Chair of Christian Thought at the University of Calgary, among others.

She is fervent about the Catholic Women's Leadership Foundation Program at St. Paul University in Ottawa. Linda was privileged to participate and subsequently contribute to the development of its alumni program. Connecting with devout, purpose-driven women across Canada has enriched her vocation. The 11-month course has empowered numerous women to realize their potential and deepen their faith. Now, as the program's director, Linda selects the participants who will be transformed by this Christ-centered initiative.

Among Linda's recent notable experiences were personal meetings with Pope Francis in Rome and the Ukrainian Catholic Patriarch, exemplifying Christ-like leadership and engagement. These moments stand out as unforgettable. Looking ahead, Linda remains committed to assisting organizations in any way possible to draw them closer to Christ.

Linda's life is not solely defined by her professional achievements; she celebrates a 40-year marriage and takes pride in her two sons, who are making their mark on the world. Her enduring love for children consistently draws her to work that benefits the younger generation.



Michelle Collett

Volunteer GrACE Treasurer



Jolyne De Marco
Volunteer GrACE Instagram
Administrator



Grant GayVolunteer GrACE Facebook
Administrator



Caij Meloche
Vounteer GrACE
Communications Officer



Karen Koester Volunteer GrACE Newsletter Editor

Further Opportunities to Volunteer

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

All thoughts on how we can we better utilize technology platforms to ensure timely and effective communication within the wider Catholic education family and beyond will be gratefully received.

Please email <u>gracedirector7@gmail.com</u> to express interest and suggestions.

GrACE's Appreciation for Dr. Jason West!



GrACE extends its profound gratitude to Dr. Jason West, the most tenured president in Newman Theological College's history. Dr. West has been an influential GrACE Apostle and Advocate, essential in advancing and endorsing GrACE's mission.

We are thrilled that Dr. West will resume his full-time teaching duties in 2025 following his sabbatical year and eagerly anticipate his ongoing contributions to the academic and spiritual development of our students.

Resources for Schools

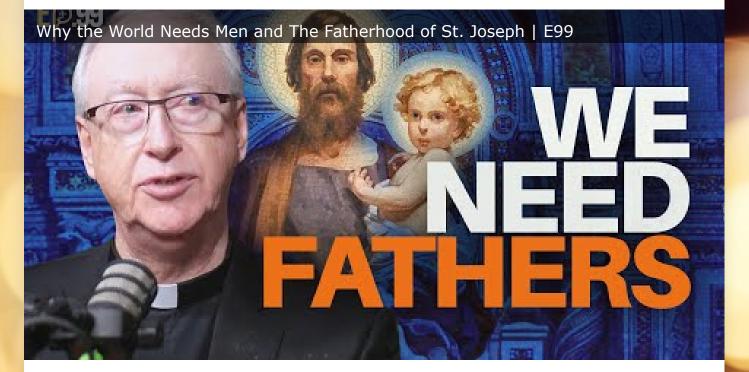
- 'Instruction of the Congregation for Catholic Education, 'The identity of the Catholic school for a culture of dialogue, from the Vatican, 2022
- <u>Growing in Faith Symposium 5 Marks of Catholic Education</u>
- CCSSA Catholic Leadership Quality Standards
- 5 Marks of an Excellent Catholic Leader
- The Excellent Catholic Teacher
- Calgary Catholic Schools
- Redeemer Revelations



Upfront with the Archbishop

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







June is the Month of the Sacred Heart

June has been dedicated to the Sacred Heart since the feast was instituted in the 19th century.



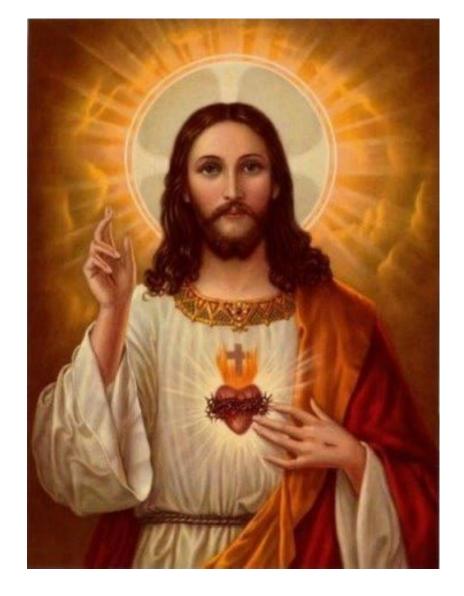
Litany

The Litany of the Sacred Heart

☑ archtoronto.org

CatholicTV on X (formerly Twitter): "Pope Francis announced that he is preparing a document on the Sacred Heart of Jesus.Its goal is to repurpose to the whole Church this devotion laden with spiritual beauty. He plans to release it in September. pic.twitter.com/8KP2dmYzJJ / X"

Pope Francis announced that he is preparing a document on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Its goal is to repurpose to the whole Church this devotion laden with spiritual beauty. He plans to release it in September. pic.twitter.com/8KP2dmYzJJ



x.com

☑ twitter.com

Social Media Posts from around Alberta

St. Jerome, CCSD, and Mrs Oliverio's Grade 2 Class at Heritage Park!

Home / X (twitter.com)





Central Albertans medal at track and field provincials

Red Deer schools finish on top of the leaderboard

☑ t.co



Shalom Media



Shalom World TV is a 24/7, high-definition Catholic television channel that caters to all ages with its vibrant and engaging content. The channel provides a rich video library of programs, including testimonials, documentaries, interviews, dramas, animated shows, talk shows, news, music, and educational sessions. The variety of topics, from personal God experiences to discussions and programs addressing contemporary issues in

light of Catholic teachings, serves as a valuable resource for classroom faith education. Its diverse offerings ensure something for everyone, making it an ideal companion for 14 yrs +, Catholic families, and educators. www.shalomworld.org

For our younger viewers, SW Pals offers tailored content for children aged 5 to 13, assisting them in cultivating their love for Christ and the Church, and fostering personal encounters with Christ. Bible stories, faith shared through music and games, stories of saints and heroes of faith, and activity-based programs engage and equip young viewers to develop a deeper relationship with Christ. Learning faith can be fun with SW Pals, providing great support for teachers to teach faith to young children. All programs can be viewed on the SW Pals segment daily on Shalom World from 4 PM - 6 PM Eastern. On-demand videos are available on the SW Pals website, www.swpals.org.

You can access Shalom World via <u>shalomworld.org</u> and freely download the app on mobile phones, tablets, and any of the latest smart TVs, such as Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV, etc. One

of the standout features of Shalom World is its commitment to providing commercial-free content, making it accessible to all without any cost. This dedication to spreading the Gospel without the distraction of advertisements ensures that viewers can fully immerse themselves in faith-filled programming.







Shalom Tidings: Stories of Hope and Faith

In addition to its television offerings, Shalom Media also publishes Shalom Tidings, a magazine designed to bring peace and hope to its readers. Featuring personal stories of faith and encounters with Christ, Shalom Tidings offers a glimpse into the everyday lives of people living a life rooted in Christ, their journey, and many practical tips for living a holy and hope-filled everyday life. This bimonthly magazine is available for free subscription and is an excellent resource for educators. It is also a Christ-centered lifestyle magazine that any Catholic school library could carry. Through the FREE Shalom Tidings app, articles are accessible in 14 languages. Learn more at: www.shalomtidings.org

Embracing the Future with Faith

As Catholics, it's crucial to utilize the power of media to counter the negative influences in our lives. Shalom World exemplifies our potential to spread Christ's peace and love through modern means. Its resources supplement Catholic education in schools, offering faith support to students, parents, parishes, and educators alike. For more information, visit Shalom World, SW PALS and Shalom Tidings or write to them at info@shalomworld.org if you'd like to integrate Shalom World media resources into your schools.

