



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

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

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Supplementary Statement to Catholic Education Sunday 2017 Letter

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Every year in November, we, the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, write a letter to you on the occasion of Catholic Education Sunday. This year we have repeated the practice. Drawing from the teaching of St. Paul, our letter focuses on truth, goodness and beauty. These are hallmarks of Catholic education. In addition to this letter, we offer you these further thoughts.

In our schools, students are challenged to recognize the inherent beauty and worth of the human person, and to understand and honour the gift of human sexuality. We call on them to serve others, regardless of their situation in life, with compassion and justice. The teaching we hand on to them offers a beautiful and life-affirming alternative to the negative and self-serving messages they hear every day via the various forms of modern communications.

The nature and mission of our schools is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His teaching is often countercultural in today's world, just as it was when he taught. In fact, we saw this recently in the heated public discourse on the human sexuality part of the school curriculum. Much of the media frenzy we witnessed was based upon inaccurate reporting and a misrepresentation of our moral teaching. We are grateful to representatives of our school superintendents for clarifying the issues and allowing the facts to speak for themselves. Catholic schools teach the provincial curriculum through a Catholic lens. It is what we have always done; it is what we shall continue to do in all matters, including health and wellness.

Calls to dismantle our publicly funded Catholic school system are growing ever louder, and we must not ignore them. It is important that everyone be ready to stand up for our faith and for our schools. Please be prepared to speak out in support of our Catholic schools whenever you can. We are proud of who we are as Catholics. We do not and we shall not apologize to anyone for our faith or for our schools. Everyone knows that the existence of our schools, fully permeated with our faith, is a constitutional right. Everyone should also know that this is a right we shall vigorously defend.

Catholic education is a treasure, not only for our own Catholic children but also for our province. Our society as a whole benefits when parents have meaningful choice in how their children are educated.

Please pray for our teachers, administrators and trustees. They share our commitment to Catholic education and devote themselves with great zeal to its flourishing for the benefit of our beloved children. Pray also for our government leaders. May all work together to preserve and enhance the precious gift of publicly funded Catholic education in our province.

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton



Most Reverend Gregory J. Bittman
Auxiliary Bishop of Edmonton



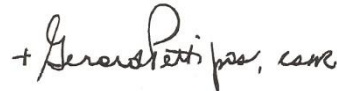
Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton



Most Reverend Paul Terrio
Bishop of St. Paul



Most Reverend William McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary



Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan



Most Reverend Mark Hagemoen
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

5 November 2017