



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

Catholic Education Week 2024

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In this month of May, we celebrate Catholic Education Week in Alberta, the Yukon, and Northwest Territories. As the Catholic Education liaison on behalf of my brother Bishops, I want to offer a heartfelt thank-you to the educators and all who serve in our Catholic schools.

The theme for Catholic Education Week 2024, “Courage to Lead”, reminds us of the call and the responsibility to live and uphold the teachings of our Catholic faith, even amidst the challenges of the world around us.

The call to be courageous is deeply rooted in Scriptures. In the Book of Joshua, the Lord counsels us: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (*Joshua 1:9*)

In a time and place where conflicting ideologies are challenging the enduring truths of our faith, it takes tremendous courage to remain steadfast in our commitment to Christ's teachings.

This courage begins in the home, with parents entrusted by God with the vital responsibility of imparting the values and principles of our faith within the hearts and minds of their children. When parents make the courageous decision to entrust their children to the care of our Catholic schools, those schools become a supporting partner to parents in the education and spiritual formation of their children.

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Catholic schools have the distinctive mission to integrate faith and reason, providing students with an education that not only challenges them academically but also nurtures faith formation. Within this educational environment, the teachings of the Catholic faith are permeated into the fabric of daily life.

Although we are blessed with a constitutionally protected, publicly funded Catholic school system, nevertheless we cannot take this for granted. It is our collective responsibility as Christian faithful to be courageous in ensuring that we are forming confident disciples of Jesus Christ and his teachings. It is incumbent upon the entire school community – administrators, teachers, staff, clergy, parents and parishioners – to honour this commitment.

May God grant us the wisdom, courage, and strength to fulfill our sacred duty with courage and love, knowing that He walks alongside us every step of the way.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

✠Richard W. Smith

Alberta Liaison Bishop for Catholic Education
Archbishop of Edmonton