

THE CATHOLIC DIMENSION

Speaking of Catholic Education in
Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon

Published by the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association

Winter 2017

ACSTA Welcomes New Vice President

By Anthony Murdoch
ACSTA Communications Director



New ACSTA Vice President Paul M. Bourassa with ACSTA President Adriana LaGrange

Paul M. Bourassa, Catholic trustee from Conseil scolaire FrancoSud was elected as the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) new Vice President on November 19 at the ACSTA Annual General Meeting. Adriana LaGrange from Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools was acclaimed as ACSTA President. Both terms are for a one-year period.

The ACSTA would like to thank John Tomkinson for his hard work, commitment, and faithful dedication to Catholic education as a trustee for St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Regional School Division over the past many years, and for his service as ACSTA Vice President for the past two years.

Paul M. Bourassa has been a Catholic trustee for Conseil scolaire FrancoSud since 2012. He has served on the ACSTA Board of Directors in the past, and is pleased with his election as the new ACSTA Vice President.

“A few different trustees asked if it was something about which I had thought, I honestly had not,” said Paul. “Nonetheless, with encouragement from people whose opinion I respected and trusted, including my wife, I felt it was the right thing to do. I think I can provide a unique viewpoint given that I am trained as a lawyer as opposed to a teacher.”

ACSTA President Adriana LaGrange is very pleased to introduce Paul M. Bourassa as our newest executive team member.

“On behalf of all of ACSTA, I congratulate and welcome Paul to the position of ACSTA Vice President. I thank Paul for answering the call to serve and share his many gifts and talents. Paul is truly dedicated to and passionate about Catholic Education.”



Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association

Celebrate, preserve, promote and enhance Catholic education

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Paul and Adriana receiving the blessing song from trustees at the AGM

Paul is adamant that one of the biggest challenges facing Catholic education is the constant state of attack it is in. His solution to this problem is honest and intellectual dialogue in assisting those who don't always see eye to eye with the Catholic education viewpoint.

"I feel that those attacking Catholic education are at times engaging in intellectual dishonesty," said Paul. "Turning the other cheek is hard as we are human and my cheek is sore, we have to continue to work inclusively with those who attack us and it can be challenging."

The ACSTA is on Facebook and Twitter! Like our page today to keep informed on issues important to Catholic education. Follow and like us at @ACSTANews on Twitter and Facebook



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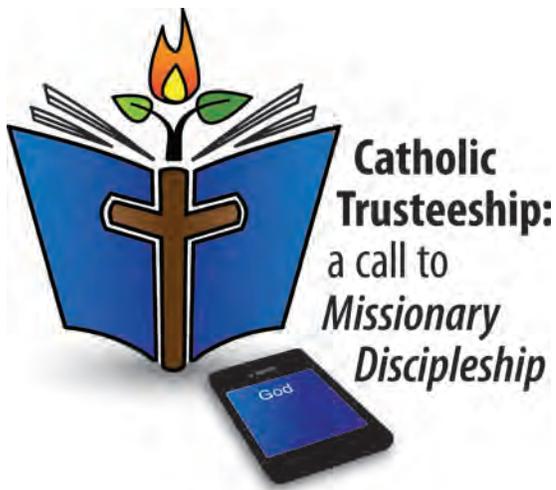
Paul is looking forward to working with ACSTA President Adriana LaGrange and supporting her in his role as Vice President.

"I have tremendous respect for Adriana and I will benefit from her wisdom and earnestness," said Paul. "I will support her whenever she asks for help and will always be honest and hold true to my principles and values even if it means we have to respectfully disagree."

Paul is a Federal Crown Prosecutor with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada and is currently on a one-year sabbatical. He recently took a contract with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, doing work in Zimbabwe. He travels there every few months. Paul was born and raised in Regina and moved to Calgary at the age of 14, attending Calgary Catholic schools. He resides in Calgary with his wife Kelly and their three daughters.



ACSTA Vice President Paul M. Bourassa addressing trustees after his election



ACSTA 2017 AGM & Convention Highlights

By Anthony Murdoch
ACSTA Communications Director

The Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) Annual General Meeting and Convention took place from November 17 to 19 at the Westin Edmonton, opening with a new trustee orientation session for newly elected Catholic trustees.

The theme for 2017 was "Catholic Trusteeship: A Call to Missionary Discipleship." Keynote speakers for 2017 were Bishop Emeritus Henry and Fr. Stefano Penna, who both gave informed, insightful and inspiring addresses to Catholic trustees and guests in attendance.

Bishop Henry spoke on the theme "time is greater than space" using advice from Pope Francis. He encouraged Catholic trustees to be champions of Catholic education, to always be disciples of Jesus and to stand their ground when faced with challenges.

"We have to have a deep desire to do the right thing because this is for our own benefit. We have to cultivate this desire to do good works according to our capabilities and the values really that we see as important, despite what some of our friends may tell us," said Bishop Henry in his address.

Bishop Henry also touched on sex education, and how in a society where sexuality has been down played it is important to ensure that children are well educated in this area.

"Children need help to deal with their sexual urges through a process of self-knowledge and self-control, rather than simply giving it a free reign with the hope that nobody gets hurt in the process," said Henry. "They have to be able to seek out positive influences while shunning those things that will cripple our capacity for love."

Fr. Penna, who currently serves as the director of the Benedict XVI Institute for New Evangelization at Newman Theological College in Edmonton, spoke to trustees with two talks, the



Fr. Stefano Penna speaking at the 2017 ACSTA AGM & Convention

first "Another Possible World" - the vision, and the other on "Excellence in Solidarity" - the way.

Fr. Penna, drawing on words from Pope Francis, stressed that if Catholic education is going to thrive, it needs to continue to foster, form, and grow its teachers faith life. One way to do this he suggested is to empower the Catholic teachers who are really strong in their faith to help mentor and grow the faith of those who might not be as strong in their beliefs. Fr. Penna mentioned that for Catholic education to merely guarantee that it has schools is not going to cut it if there are no people to support those institutions. He went on to say that Catholic education should always start with ensuring that its teachers are as well formed as possible, also noting that one must never judge one's situation.

"The critical issue is can we provide true teachers of the faith," said Fr. Penna "We have to remember that it is not the amount of schools or the amount of students. Promoting these will just energize the enemy."

Continued on next page



Bishop Emeritus Henry speaking at the 2017 ACSTA AGM & Convention

In his second talk, Fr. Penna noted to always remember where Jesus is in the midst of all decisions, and that it is better to be honest, wounded, and to take risks than to always play it safe with what is easier to do or say. He stressed to not be afraid in asking the challenging questions and to always be merciful and loving when helping to guide staff members on their faith journeys.

Silent Auction, Banquet and Awards

A silent auction was once again held over the course of the Friday and Saturday. A total amount of \$5,374 was raised at the auction. The ACSTA wants to thank all of those who donated auction items. Proceeds from the auction will be split 50/50 between Toonies for Tuition and Development & Peace.

On the evening of the Saturday, the ACSTA held a banquet which also served as the backdrop for the annual ACSTA Awards Ceremony.

For 2017, the ACSTA awarded for the first time the Justice Kevin Feehan Catholic Education Scholarship, which was announced by Dentons Canada LLP at last year's 50th Anniversary Gala. The \$1500 award is given annually to an individual who shows commitment to promoting and living Catholic Education values. The 2017 recipient for the award is Emily Frost, who was on hand at the banquet to receive the award from Justice Kevin Feehan and representatives from Dentons Canada LLP.

The St. Thomas More Award recognizes the contributions

of our outgoing Board of Directors. Recipients for this year were Peter Tepler, Calgary RCSSD, Ron Schreiber, Christ the Redeemer CSRD, Karen Doucet, Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord, Chantal Monfette, Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest, Genevieve Poulin, Conseil scolaire FrancoSud, Larry Kowalczyk, Edmonton CSSD, Gerald Bernakevitch, Evergreen CSRD, Fay Cailliau, Holy Family CRD, Judy Lane, Holy Spirit RCSR, Kelly Henderson, Lakeland RCSSD, Dana Kentner, Living Waters CRD, Liam McNiff, Red Deer Catholic Schools, Susan Kathol, St. Thomas Aquinas RCSR, and John Tomkinson, St. Thomas Aquinas RCSR.

The Appreciation Awards are given to those who have shown an honest and sincere dedication in their work in Catholic education in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon. Recipients for 2017 were Sara Farid, Most Rev. Mark Hagemoen, Rev. Eric Nelson, Dr. Gerry Turcotte, and John Witschen.

Next up was the Meritorious Service Award, which is for Catholic trustees who over the course of their time as a trustee have demonstrated excellence in Catholic Education. Those receiving the award for 2017 were Gemma Christie and Kelly Henderson.

The Honourary Life Award is given to someone who has demonstrated outstanding support for Catholic Education, and it is an award which recognizes the commitment of a person, other than a school trustee, who has demonstrated a love and passion in support of Catholic schools. Recipients for 2017 were Dr. Garry Andrews, Ken Loehndorf, and Bishop Emeritus Frederick Henry.

As in year's previous, the ACSTA banquet concluded with the sharing of talent from students in Catholic schools across the province. For 2017, the ACSTA was thrilled to be able to have performing for banquet guests, via a pre-recorded video feed, the performances of Holy Spirit RCSR schools from Lethbridge Catholic Central High School under the direction of Danielle Christensen and St. Francis Junior High School, under the direction of Chris Hartman. A special thank you to both schools for bringing such wonderful music to evening.

The ACSTA would also like to thank our premier sponsors Dentons Canada LLP and Pearson Canada, and our patron sponsor Universal Church Supplies Edmonton.

ACSTA Sponsors - Thank you!

A graphic with a red border containing sponsor information. At the top, it says 'Premier Sponsors - Dentons Canada LLP Edmonton, Pearson.' Below this is a purple arrow pointing right with the Chinese characters '大成' and the word 'DENTONS' in white. Underneath are the logos for Pearson and a colorful cross. At the bottom, it says 'Patron Sponsors - Universal Church Supplies' followed by the logo for Universal Church Supplies Inc. | Edmonton.

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ACSTA AGM & Convention Photo Gallery



The ACSTA AGM & Convention concluded with a mass with Bishops Motiuk, Henry and Pettipas



ACSTA Choir singing at the closing mass with the help of students from Edmonton Catholic

ACSTA welcomes new board and trustees

Municipal elections in Alberta were held on October 16, and resulted in approximately one third of existing Catholic trustees in Alberta being either replaced through an election or acclaimed as the only candidate.

As a result of the elections, the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) saw its own board of directors change 50 per cent, bringing many new faces around the table.

The ACSTA would like to welcome newcomers to its board, Paul M. Bourassa (Vice President), Lory Lovinelli (Calgary Catholic), Louis Arseneault (Conseil scolaire FrancoSud), John de Jong (Christ the Redeemer), Steve Daigle (Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord No. 2), Stéphanie Ambrose (Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest No. 1), Alene Mutala (Edmonton Catholic), Mel Malowany (Evergreen Catholic), John Kuran (Holy Family Catholic), Pat Bremner (Holy Spirit Catholic), Vince MacDonald (Lakeland Catholic), Tammy Kennedy (Living Waters Catholic), Kim Pasula (Red Deer Catholic), and Henry Effen (STAR Catholic).

SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS!

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The Catholic Dimension is distributed twice yearly.

Lunch with Minister of Education David Eggen

By Anthony Murdoch
ACSTA Communications Director



Alberta Minister of Education David Eggen speaks to Catholic trustees at a special luncheon during the AGM & Convention

The ACSTA was very pleased to have Alberta Minister of Education David Eggen on hand for a luncheon with trustees on Saturday, November 18. Minister Eggen voiced support for Catholic education at the luncheon, and also acknowledged that diversity in education in Alberta is a good thing.

“It (Catholic Schools) just provides that very high bar and standard for all of our education system and you as Catholic Education leads the way in so many of those areas...The way that we have done it in Alberta - with a choice of education between separate schools and Catholic Education, public education, private education, charter, francophone - I think we have a great mix,” said Minister Eggen.

The Minister later went on to say, “I also want to make sure that you know that we are committed every step of the way to supporting our education system and that you have my full support as the Minister of Education, of the government of Alberta and Premier Rachel Notley, to ensure the integrity of

Catholic Education in this province, to ensure the strength of faith-based education in this province of Alberta, and to ensure that it is fully funded and supported through all forms of our government here in the province of Alberta.”

Minister Eggen also touched on assessment results as well as the role of parents in education.

“You (Catholic Schools) produce excellent results on assessments, you produce excellent results of students choosing to move to post-secondary, you produce excellent results in graduation rates and attendance rates,” said Minister Eggen. “I do recognize and completely support the critical role that parents play in education, well-being and development of their children”



(L-R) Annie McKittrick Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education, ACSTA President Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education David Eggen.

The ACSTA would like to thank Minister Eggen for taking the time to speak to Catholic trustees at the luncheon and will continue to offer blessings to him, his family, and his ministry of education. The ACSTA looks forward to a continued positive relationship.

Archdiocese of Edmonton launches Grandin Media



By Andrew Ehrkamp
News Editor, Grandin Media

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton is excited to launch grandinmedia.ca, a new Catholic news website that will feature stories of inspiration that highlight the beauty of our faith. Grandin media's official launch date is scheduled for December 11.

Our goal is to inform, to inspire, to evangelize and to fill a void that's lacking in the secular media, especially when it comes to news – the Catholic angle – and to have it at the forefront. Our goal is to provide news in which faith hasn't been edited out.

Grandin Media started with the vision of Archbishop Richard Smith, after the closure of the Western Catholic Reporter newspaper last fall. Newspapers were the medium of record in the past. Today, we're sharing the good news of our faith in the new public square - online communications - on a smartphone, desktop or laptop computer, or on social media through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or Vimeo.

Our intention with Grandin Media is to engage the user of the site with well-written and researched news, features and beautifully shot videos from within the Edmonton Archdiocese through our own team of reporters and videographers. We'll also have news with a Catholic angle from across Canada, the Vatican and around the world through the Canadian Catholic News and Catholic News Service.



Grandin Media News Editor Andrew Ehrkamp

The name of the website itself "Grandin Media" honours our roots. Bishop Justin Vital Grandin was instrumental in developing the Catholic Church in Western Canada. In 1871, he was appointed the first Bishop of St. Albert, prior to the establishment of the Archdiocese of Edmonton.

Grandin Media also acts as a locator. Bishop Grandin's name graces neighbourhoods, a school and even a transit station within the Archdiocese of Edmonton. However, our goal is to reach beyond the estimated 390,000 Roman Catholics within the Archdiocese to others of the Catholic faith, those who practise a different religion, and even those who don't ascribe to any faith at all.

Launching Grandin Media has been a team effort, led by Lorraine Turchansky, the chief communications officer for the Archdiocese of Edmonton. We have assembled a great team of professionals, each of them experts in their fields,

including Alan Schietzsch, our webmaster, social media specialist Lincoln Ho, and videographer Matthew Bodnarek. You may also remember graphic artist Chris Jugo and reporter Thandiwe Konguavi who bring continuity from the Western Catholic Reporter.

At the heart, the goal is to tell a good story that engages the reader, whether it's at the local parish or at the national level. To that end, Grandin Media will cover stories that allow us to go beyond our traditional Catholic media boundaries.

In the past six months, we reported on the national Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Inquiry. We covered Archbishop Smith's first visit to a mosque, and the islamophobia that local Muslims face. We examined the future of palliative care through two sisters who renewed their faith as they journeyed with their dying mother. We profiled Chris Zyp, a paraplegic teacher at Holy Trinity High School in south Edmonton, who credits his faith and prayer for his continued recovery. And this past summer, we were in Fort Simpson, N.W.T., looking at the future of our faith in the North.

Grandin Media also aims to provide a rapid, Catholic response to challenges when they arise. We're pushing back against a culture that's not only anti-Catholic, but anti-Christian. To that end, we provide timely stories on issues such as gender identity and gay-straight alliances in schools, and proposed changes to the sex-education curriculum in Catholic schools.

We will have columnists on our site as well, starting with Archbishop Smith and Father Ron Rolheiser, the internationally known author and speaker who got his start as a columnist locally through the Western Catholic Reporter. We hope to add more columnists in the future.

We hope to engage everyone online and build relationships by telling great stories that you don't see in secular media. Our goal is to be the voice of the Catholic community in Alberta and to tell inspiring, life-affirming stories of our faith in action.

We are Grandin Media. But so are all of us within the Catholic community. We look forward to a great and long-lasting relationship.

Find us at grandinmedia.ca and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

Update from the President

"A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." Isaiah 40:3

By: Adriana LaGrange, ACSTA President



In today's world we cannot underestimate the need for our children to hear the good news of Jesus Christ. In our Catholic schools we are blessed to be able to "prepare the way of the Lord" by ensuring that all have an opportunity to encounter our living God each and every day.

As we look back on 2017, one thing that clearly stands out is that the demand for Catholic education is stronger than ever. Which means, that as an organization, the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) spent much of the year working tirelessly on our members behalf to live out our mission which is "To celebrate, preserve, promote, and enhance Catholic education". We could not do this but for the amazingly dedicated and faith filled men and women who selflessly have offered to serve their communities as trustees. Congratulations to all trustees (seasoned veterans and newbies) on your recent election to trusteeship and for committing the next four years to God's service in Catholic education!

Over the course of 2017, it seemed that there were many times when Catholic education was directly challenged. We at the ACSTA worked hard to ensure that not only were our rights respected, but that those in the general public were both well aware of and informed of our rights. To that end, and with advocacy playing an ever increasing role, the board and administration team of the ACSTA chose to revisit its Strategic Plan and better define and narrow down key areas of focus in order to better advocate on behalf of Catholic education. These three key areas are Advocacy, Faith Formation and Stakeholder Engagement & Solidarity. We look forward to sharing more details of this plan in the near future.

Also of importance in 2017, was the consultation done with Alberta Education on new curriculum development, the formation process for Catholic School Districts and other changes to education legislation. The ACSTA was always at the table to ensure Catholic education was never forgotten and was well represented at important levels of government. Sometimes these discussions with government have been difficult ones, as we don't always see eye to eye, but we have found that we can always agree on our common goals of providing the best possible education in a welcoming, safe and caring environment for all while still being good stewards of the financial, human and other resources entrusted to our care.

United in a common mission, Catholic education owes its very existence to the hard work and dedication of so many, from trustees to school administrators, teachers, and support staff, clergy, grandparents, community, etc. right down to the students and parents at the school level. All have a role to play.

In the words of the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories in the 2017 letter for Catholic Education Sunday:

"Therefore, it is incumbent upon everyone involved in the ministry of Catholic education to ensure that by means of our curriculum content, extra-curricular activity, and Christian witness, our students are immersed in the true, the good, and the beautiful and helped to ponder them deeply in the light of our Catholic faith."

Our historical treasure called Catholic education began in Alberta over 170 years ago and it will take all of us working together to ensure that publicly funded Catholic education remains authentic, intact and viable for generations to come. Catholic education belongs to each and every one of us and I pray we can continue to count on your support to proudly and publicly defend Catholic education!

"In switching on the light of the Nativity scene, we wish for the light of Christ to be in us. A Christmas without light is not Christmas. Let there be light in the soul, in the heart; let there be forgiveness to others; let there be no hostilities, which are dark. Let there be the beautiful light of Jesus. This is my wish for all of you, when you turn on the light of the crib."

Pope Francis

May the light of Christ shine in your heart this Christmas and throughout 2018!

Your Servant in Christ,

Adriana LaGrange
ACSTA President



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

November 5, 2017

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

"Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires," Amen.



Have a Happy and Blessed Christmas and New Year 2018 from all of us at the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association



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GOOD NEWS!**

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NET Ministries - CTR Partnership

Christ The Redeemer Catholic Schools enters into a third year of partnership with NET ministries

Submitted by: By Jennifer Rorke, Religious Education Coordinator
Christ The Redeemer Catholic Schools

“Do you know what the best tool is for evangelizing the young? Another young person. This is the path to follow!”

Pope Francis homily from World Youth Day Sunday Mass in Rio de Janeiro 2013.

NET Ministries is a non-profit Catholic youth ministry whose sole mission is to challenge young people to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church. NET ministries proclaims the Gospel of Christ through a personal witness



of faith, invites young people to live for Christ, forms young people in Christian character through the study and practice of our faith, and equips young adults and youth workers with the ministry skills needed for evangelization.

Every August approximately 40-50 young people (aged 18-28) leave their homes, jobs, schools, families, and friends to devote 9 months to serving Jesus Christ and His Church through this ministry. After six weeks of intensive training, commissioned by the Archbishop of Ottawa, the teams preach the gospel across Canada from BC to Newfoundland to the Yukon.

Christ The Redeemer Catholic Schools (CTR) has entered into a third year of partnership with NET ministries. One team is dedicated solely to Christ The Redeemer for nine months, providing ministry to our students. School retreats and class presentations are among a myriad of ways the team connects with

our students. The team travels among CTR Catholic's 18 schools and are hosted by local families for their accommodation. CTR is the first school division to host its own team in the NET's 23 year history.

The praise students give to this team is high. One high school student says: "Everything that we did - like the talks and the silent praying time - got me to know God in a deeper way and how he can work through people. All the people on the NET team have such a strong faith that just being around them helped me deepen my faith."

Another student supports this claim: "I felt God had a special message for me during the women's part of the retreat because it highlighted issues that I specifically struggle with."

The NET ministry inspires students to join: "God worked through those amazing young men and women [of the NET team] to show me the potential that my life has for serving Him, and I hope to be just as influential and inspiring as I continue my own journey with NET!"

The impact that NET ministries has had in the CTR Catholic school division is great. Students and staff have been inspired to enter more fully the life God has in mind of each of them.

"We look forward to the many blessings that NET ministries will bring to our school division this year," says Jennifer Rorke, Religious Education Coordinator with CTR Catholic.



“The Young Church is alive and well”

Submitted by: Paul Corrigan, Principal, Faith & Wellness Development
Elk Island Catholic Schools



“The Young Church is alive and well.” This was the consistent message for the students and staff of Elk Island Catholic Schools who came together to take a trip to participate in the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis in mid November, joining over 20,000 other youth from across the United States and elsewhere.

“It was a great way to see that there are so many other young people from around the world who share our Catholic Faith” said one attendee. Students and staff were treated to world class speakers, music, prayer, reconciliation, mass, Eucharistic adoration, and a true sense of community and belonging.

The theme of the conference was “Called: Llamas” and students were called to consider how they are called by name, called to live in communion, and called to more than what the secular world would offer them, a call to be saints.

Along with 40 Bishops and hundreds

of Religious, students were able to celebrate, pray and learn. Some of the speakers that we heard included Emily Wilson, Fr. Leo Patalinghug, Chris Stefanick, Jason Everet, Sr. Miriam Heidland, Roy Petitifils and many more! A once in a lifetime opportunity.

The group, which consisted of students from each of the four High Schools in Elk Island Catholic also took the time to visit and volunteer at a Senior’s centre. The residents were quite pleased that folks would come all the way from Canada just to clean their dining rooms and sing them Christian songs during their lunch time!

For the students, and the staff that were able to attend, the experience was a profound opportunity to reconnect, or connect for the first time with our shared Catholic faith.



Fr. Leo Patalinghug, known as the cooking priest who defeated an Iron Chef, was on hand at the event. Fr. Leo also founded Grace Before Meals” an apostolic movement to strengthen relationships through the family meal.



Calgary Catholic Schools Update

Submitted by: Tania Van Brunt, Director of Communications
Calgary Catholic School District

Welcoming our new Calgary Catholic Board of Trustees

The Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD) officially welcomed its new Board of Trustees during the oath of office ceremony held at a public meeting on October 24, 2017. Myra D'Souza, Wards 1, 2 & Cochrane; Linda Wellman, Wards 3, 5 & Airdrie; Pamela Rath, Wards 4 & 7; Lory Iovinelli, Wards 6 & 8; Cheryl Low, Wards 9, 10 & Chestermere; Cathie Williams, Wards 11 & 12 and Mary Martin, Wards 13 & 14. CCSD is pleased to welcome three brand-new trustees to the Board of Trustees: Myra D'Souza, Pamela Rath and Lory Iovinelli. We also wish to thank retiring trustees Serafino Scarpino, Wards 1, 2 & Cochrane, Margaret Belcourt, Wards 4 & 7 and Peter Teppler, Wards 6 & 8 for their years of service.

Their hard work and dedication will not be forgotten. Trustees also elected a chair and vice-chair for the 2017-2018 school year at its organizational meeting. Cheryl Low will serve as board chair. Mrs. Low is entering her second term as a member of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Pamela Rath, a new trustee on the Board, was elected as vice-chair for the 2017-2018 term.



L to R: Lory Iovinelli, Cathie Williams, Pamela Rath, Cheryl Low, Mary Martin, Linda Wellman, Myra D'Souza.

organizational meeting. Cheryl Low will serve as board chair. Mrs. Low is entering her second term as a member of the Board of Trustees. Mrs. Pamela Rath, a new trustee on the Board, was elected as vice-chair for the 2017-2018 term.

Champions at the Calgary Catholic School District

No matter which school Calgary Catholic students attend, the goal is the same. CCSD wants to be champions for each and every child in its school district. This means that each student has at least one trusted adult they can turn to at their school and nobody falls through the cracks. Research shows that one of the most important things in a child's life is having a positive and stable relationship with a caring adult. At school, that adult could be a teacher, counselor, teaching assistant, sports coach, TA, caretaker or any other member of the staff. CCSD knows that having a champion at school can have tremendous benefits for students – from reduced bullying to lower drop-out rates to improved social, emotional and academic capabilities. This type of relationship-building is key to CCSD's success and it's why being champions for students is CCSD's academic theme for 2017-2018. CCSD has also created a video to share the idea of champions with everyone across the district: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_kQqIBLYCQ.

Partnership with Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre

The Calgary Catholic School District is very proud of its partnership with the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre (SKCAC). On October 19, 2017, the SCAC launched a toolkit across Alberta to support teachers and school staff in recognizing and reporting child abuse. The need for this resource was identified following a survey conducted by the SKCAC that found school staff were not always confident in their ability to recognize and report abuse. The toolkit is being rolled out across Alberta school districts through

facilitated sessions, and will also be provided to schools across the nation. "We want to support our teachers and school staff to create the most positive learning environment for our students," says Gary Strother, Chief Superintendent, Calgary Catholic School Board. The toolkit is available online at www.sheldonkennedycac.ca/suspectabuse with downloadable supporting documents including a conversation guide and suspect abuse card.

Orange Shirt Day 2017

Orange Shirt Day is an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come. As a district, we support all efforts to increase student and staff awareness of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit history, culture and successes, as well as the history of residential schools. This year, Orange Shirt Day falls on Saturday, September 30, but our schools recognized the annual event with activities leading up to and following the date. Success for First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) students remains one of the four board priorities of the



Staff at St. Brigid School recognize Orange Shirt Day 2017.

Calgary Catholic School District

The results of CCSD's 2016-2017 provincial achievement tests and diploma examination results display promising results: 80.8 per cent of CCSD FNMI students graduate in three years. This is 27.2 per cent above the provincial average of 53.6 per cent. This rate is higher than the provincial rate for non-FNMI students. CCSD's FNMI student dropout rate of 2.6 per cent is 3.2 per cent better than the provincial rate of 5.8 per cent.

District Faith Theme 2017-2018

The Calgary Catholic School District's new faith theme this year, which will continue to be the faith theme over the next three years is: "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you" (Matthew 7:7). In this initial year, CCSD will focus on the first part of the scripture verse, "Ask and it will be given you." Just as Jesus taught his disciples how to pray and could be found praying in different kinds of situations himself, Jesus instructs us to habitually approach God in prayer so that we may grow towards perfection. We are to bring our entire being and all of our needs to our heavenly Father and never grow tired of seeking God's help. Fostering a faith relationship with God through prayer is part of the ongoing work of Catholic education as it is through prayer that we come to know God's abundant love and mercy for us, are helped to become all that God wishes us to be and learn to live, move and act in God's abiding presence.

Legally Speaking:

Government funding of non-Catholics in Catholic schools held Unconstitutional by the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench



Anna Loparco



Christina Porretta



Robert Murray

Submitted by: Anna Loparco, Christina Porretta - Partners, Dentons Canada LLP, and Robert Murray, Managing Director of Dentons' Government group

I. Introduction

This recent decision of the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench, *Good Spirit School Division No. 204 v. Christ the Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 212*¹ interprets the age-old constitutional guarantees for publicly funded Catholic schools in Saskatchewan. The plaintiff, Good Spirit School Division No. 204 (GSSD), sought a declaration that certain provisions of Saskatchewan's *Education Act*, 1995² and The Education Funding Regulations offend ss. 2(a) and s. 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (the Charter).

Despite the numerous issues put forward by the parties, the essence of the decision turns on two very important issues:

1. Is government funding of non-minority faith students in Saskatchewan's separate schools a constitutionally protected component of separate schools under s. 93 of the Constitution Act, 1867?
2. If such funding is not constitutionally protected under s. 93 of the Constitution does it infringe ss. 2(a) and 15 of the Charter?

The trial judge recognized that the constitutional guarantee that operates in three Canadian provinces, namely Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, entitles Roman Catholics and Protestants to petition the provincial government to create a separate denominational school if they form a minority in a school attendance area, "... is an immutably cast constitutional right under s. 93 of the Constitution and is unquestioned in this action."³ However, he held that the extension of that right to *funding of all students* is not constitutionally guaranteed, which exposed the claim to scrutiny under the *Charter*. Without the protection of the Constitution, he found that funding of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools automatically infringed both ss. 2(a) and 15 and could not be saved by s. 1.

II. Brief facts

In 2003, Yorkdale School Division closed its community K-Grade 8 School in Theodore, Saskatchewan. Its 42 students would have to be bussed to the neighbouring school in Springside, 17 km away. Using the rights pursuant to *The Education Act*, 1995, a group of Roman Catholics successfully petitioned the Minister of Education to form the Theodore Roman Catholic School Division.

In 2005, Yorkdale School Division (now GSSD) commenced an action against what is now Christ the Teacher Roman Catholic School Division #212 ("CTT") and the Government of Saskatchewan. GSSD alleged, amongst other things, that per student grants paid to a Catholic school division for non-Catholic students is discriminatory against public schools under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. GSSD argued that such funding goes beyond the denominational elements of Catholic education so that the funding of non-Catholics students is not an entrenched constitutional right and therefore, government action that funds non-Catholic students at Catholic schools is exposed to review under the Charter. The defendants took the position that funding of non-Catholic students at Catholic schools is a right protected by s. 93 of the Constitution and, therefore, immune under s. 29 of the Charter from any challenge.

III. Trial judge's decision

1. Catholic schools have no constitutional right under s. 93(1) to receive funding for non-Catholic students

At the heart of the trial judge's decision is the issue of whether the Constitution provides a denominational right to separate schools in Saskatchewan to receive provincial government funding to educate non-minority faith students. If the funding of non-Catholic students is constitutionally protected under s. 93, GSSD's action would have failed because it would have been immune from challenge pursuant to s. 29 of the *Charter*.

Continued on next page

Section 93(1).⁴ provides a guarantee, a minimum assurance, that a province cannot lessen the rights of classes of persons respecting denominational schools as they stood at the time of union or, as in Saskatchewan, under the 1901 Ordinances. Section 93(3) permits a post-union extension of the denominational rights protected by s. 93(1). The trial judge held that legislation under ss. 93(1) and 93(3) can be Charter-immune; however, to gain this immunity the legislation must be equally subjected to the “denominational aspects test” - i.e., the purpose of the legislation must be tied to upholding the religious essence of the denominational school.⁵ The defendants argued that funding of all students was a denominational right at the time of the union as opposed to after the union, and was therefore protected by section 93(1).

The trial judge held that s. 93(1) does not protect funding of non-minority faith students based on two reasons. First, in reviewing the historical evidence of the creation of the 1901 Ordinances, he found that it did not include a right or privilege for Catholic schools to admit and receive funding for non-Catholic students. Second, he held that funding was not a denominational right. He concluded as follows:

The reason for the existence of separate schools was to ensure that after the first public school was created in a school district, parents of the minority faith could separate their children from the majority's children to inculcate their children in the minority's faith, away and separate from the influences of the majority. If separating students was the essential reason for separate schools' existence, I fail to see why the minority would simultaneously seek a right to admit children of the majority faith from whom they took deliberate action to separate.⁶

The trial judge rejected parental choice as part of the equation. Rather, he held that “[t]he fact that some non-minority faith students attended separate schools should, in the words of the Supreme Court, be seen ‘as a matter of favour.’”⁷ In applying a purposive interpretation to the 1901 Ordinances, the trial judge held that Catholic separate schools have **no constitutional right to admit and receive funding for non-Catholic students**. The upshot is that non-Catholic students who attend a separate school will be required to pay the full freight in order to continue to attend

the school of their choosing, even though it is part of the dual public system.

2. Funding of non-minority faith students at Catholic schools is not a constitutional right under s. 17(2) of the Saskatchewan Act

The trial judge also refused to accept that funding of all students at a separate school is a denominational right on the basis that the equality in funding is guaranteed to the school pursuant to s. 17(2) of the *Saskatchewan Act*, and is not tied to the student's religious affiliation. Section 17(2) states as follows:

In the appropriation by the Legislature or distribution by the Government of the province of any moneys for the support of schools organized and carried on in accordance with the said chapter 29, or any Act passed in amendment thereof or in substitution therefor, there shall be **no discrimination against schools of any class** described in the said chapter 29. (emphasis added)



The defendants argued that s. 17(2) of the *Saskatchewan Act* (which is incorporated into the Constitution) provides a full answer to this action because it requires the government to fund both Catholic and public schools equally and without discrimination. In addition, the Government argued that s. 17(2) was intended to create a second publicly-funded school system to provide choice to parents.

The trial judge rejected both arguments. In his view, preserving separateness is the hallmark of separate school funding, and as such, “preserving separateness is the requisite consideration that must be applied before separate schools can claim equal funding under s. 17(2).”⁸ The trial judge relied on the historical evidence that separate schools were created so that a minority faith could separate their children from the majority and concluded that the purpose was unrelated to parental autonomy and fairness. Accordingly, he concluded that s. 17(2) is not a constitutional guarantee in these circumstances, which then opens the door to a Charter analysis.

3. Government funding violates ss. 2(a) and 15 of the Charter

Having found that the admission and funding of non-Catholic students in Catholic schools is not a protected

Continued on next page

right under the *Saskatchewan Act*, the trial judge proceeded to determine whether funding of non-Catholic students is a breach of the Charter as infringing ss. 2(a) (freedom of religion) and 15 (equality). He concluded that funding of non-Catholic students infringes s. 2(a) of the Charter because it violates the state's duty of religious neutrality by endorsing a particular religion and excluding others, i.e., funding of non-minority faith students confers benefits upon Catholics and Protestants not conferred upon any other faith.⁹ Given that the purpose for the constitutional protection was to give the minority Catholics a guarantee of a fully-funded separate education system that could withstand the test of time, it is not a surprise that it would be seen as a benefit conferred on one religious group over other denominations. However, as the defendants argued, this was the reason that s. 17 of the *Saskatchewan Act* should have been shielded from any Charter analysis. Accordingly, where there is a "breach of religious neutrality under s. 2(a) of the *Charter* by conferring a benefit upon one religion (the funding of Catholic schools respecting the attendance of non-Catholic students, a benefit deemed unprotected by s. 93), but not upon other religions, the Court held that an axiomatic result follows: the state has discriminated against and has unequally treated adherents of other religions."¹⁰

Similarly, the trial judge found a breach of s. 15(1) on the basis that (i) the government action of funding Catholic schools for the attendance of non-Catholic students, while no other religion receives such treatment, creates a distinction based on the enumerated ground of religion; and (ii) that this distinction creates a discriminatory impact. For example, since only Catholic schools receive full funding to admit non-adherents, Catholic schools are able to attract non-Catholic students while other faith-based schools that must charge tuition are less able to attract non-adherents.¹¹ In other words, allowing one faith – Catholics – the ability to inculcate Catholic values into a broader community at public expense but disallowing others, particular smaller religious groups like Muslims and Hindus, implies a message that some faiths are more valued than others.¹²

4. The Charter breaches cannot be saved under s. 1

In assessing whether the Charter breach can be saved by s. 1, the trial judge analyzed the question of whether providing funding to Catholic schools respecting non-Catholic students is a reasonable limit on Charter rights and demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic society. The onus was on the defendants to show that the funding has an objective of pressing and substantial concern in a free and democratic society and that the objective is proportionate to--and not outweighed by--the effect of the infringing action. The trial judge concluded that the defendants did not meet their burden under s. 1. He found that funding of non-minority faith students in separate schools "does not minimally impair the duty of neutrality and is inimical to the growing reality that Saskatchewan, like the rest of

Canada, is becoming a far more complicated mosaic of religious (and non-religious) traditions."¹³

IV. Implications for Catholic education in Alberta and Ontario

On April 28, 2017, CTT announced that it will be appealing the Decision. Among the grounds of appeal it listed errors that the trial judge made in respect of the application of s. 17(2), which CTT argues expressly prohibits any such discrimination, as well as other interpretation errors in respect of several long-standing principles related to the Constitution.

The Government of Saskatchewan, through its Premier, Brad Wall, has indicated that the government is "examining all legal and legislative options to reverse this," including invoking the notwithstanding clause contained in the Charter¹⁴. The notwithstanding clause is contained in s. 33 of the Charter and allows provincial legislatures to temporarily circumvent certain Charter-protected rights and freedoms in order to maintain current laws or pass new ones.

The Decision is not binding law in Alberta or Ontario. In response, Education Minister David Eggen has stated that it has no impact on the Alberta education system.¹⁵ Nevertheless, it may have potential negative impact on future jurisprudence in Alberta given the similarity of the *Alberta Act* and the *Saskatchewan Act*. In addition, there could be significant implications for Catholic education in Alberta and Ontario, as many detractors will be looking for justification to curtail public funding. Further, if the decision is appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, a final decision by that Court will impact the interpretation of the constitutional provisions affecting Catholic education in Alberta and Ontario.

For the complete list of footnotes and citations in this article, please visit the online version at the link below.

<https://www.dentons.com/en/insights/articles/2017/may/11/govt-funding-of-non-catholics-in-catholic-schools-held-unconstitutional>



Leaders in Catholic education converge for inaugural CCSSA Conference

Conference puts focus on five marks of Catholic education leadership

Submitted by: Vince Burke, Manager of Communications
St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Schools

With a desire to delve deeper into what it means to be a leader in Catholic education, nearly 300 Catholic school administrators converged on Red Deer for the inaugural Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta Conference.

Entitled *Marked By God: Leadership in Alberta Catholic Schools*, the conference, held Oct. 12 and 13 in Red Deer, attracted leaders in Catholic education from 21 school districts from Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The focus of the conference was to explore the Five Marks of an Excellent Catholic Leader.

“As an organization we had developed a document about the characteristics of an excellent Catholic leader, and through work we were doing at the executive table it was naturally leading to what this conference would look like focusing on leadership, which is who we all are as leaders in Catholic education,” said Dr. Bonnie Annicchiarico, conference committee chair.

“It was a natural fit to finish up that document and publish it as a resource, tie it into the conference, and base our conference around it.”

The conference turned to its own expertise to lead the presentations and discussions on the five marks, as Calgary

Catholic’s Andrea Holowka and Jennifer Woo presented on *Embracing the Dignity of All*, STAR Catholic’s Dr. Troy Davies explored *Expressing and Developing a Catholic Vision*, Christ the Redeemer’s Dr. Scott Morrison spoke candidly about his experiences regarding *Stories of Permeation*, Elk Island Catholic’s Michael Hauptman and Paul Corrigan spoke on proclaiming the Gospel Message with Isaiah 6:8, *Challenge Accepted*, and Annicchiarico wrapped up the conference

with a look at community with — *The Covenant of Community: Leading your Staff to “I Do.”*

The genesis of the conference began two years ago with discussions with the CCSSA membership and executive.

“Members identified Catholic school and district leadership professional development as a key priority,” said

Jamie McNamara, CCSSA executive director. “The executive proposed the conference concept at the November 2016 CCSSA meeting, and a steering committee was formed.” Initial estimates planned for 75 delegates as a goal, but by June 2017 250 delegates had registered and that rose to nearly 300 by September.

“The number of attendees was really affirming,” said Annicchiarico. “Once people started talking about the possibilities, all the superintendents saw the impact in having a lot of leaders talking about the same thing together.”



Hundreds of Catholic education leaders gathered for the CCSSA’s Marked By God: Leadership in Alberta Catholic Schools Conference Oct. 12 and 13 in Red Deer. (Vince Burke/ STAR Catholic Schools)

Continued on next page

From presentations that asked for educators to constantly seek the best in each other, to discovering where the seeds of faith take root, to looking to Christ as the centre of our vision, to finding the great gift in leadership by embracing the dignity of all, administrators were given the chance to explore and reflect on these dynamics in their own schools and school divisions. “The CCSSA conference was a truly wonderful experience. To hear and see witnesses of Catholic education present and proclaiming the difference we can, and do, make



Dr. Troy Davies, STAR Catholic School Division Superintendent presents on Mark 2 - Expressing and Developing a Catholic Vision at CCSSA's Marked By God: Leadership in Alberta Catholic Schools Conference Oct. 12 and 13 in Red Deer. (Vince Burke/STAR Catholic Schools)

in students was incredible,” said Jordan Robinson, principal of Christ the King School in Leduc. “For my own practice, as an educational leader, this conference provided a great renewal and reminder to bring the light of Christ to staff, students, and parents through authentic Catholic living, and by living, nurturing, and growing the five foundational marks of a Catholic school in our own building.”

Annicchiarico said she has heard countless similar responses from those who attended the conference, and truly hopes administrators left with that sense of renewal.

“There is a renewed passion from the people who participated. The conversation is thriving. I’m guessing because of the enthusiasm I’m hearing there will be a conference again,” said Annicchiarico. “There definitely is enough interest to say we should do this again.”

STAR Catholic’s remarkable FNMI Learning Day puts focus on relationships, reconciliation and understanding

Submitted by: Vince Burke, Manager of Communications
St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Schools

Partnerships have been strengthened and lines of communication reinforced among STAR Catholic staff and local First Nations partners, following a historic professional development day.

In conjunction with Orange Shirt Day, which recognizes victims of residential schools, St. Thomas Aquinas Roman (STAR) Catholic School Division held its annual Division-wide Learning Day for more than 400 staff Sept. 29 at St. Augustine School in Ponoka, with a focus on First Nations, Metis and Inuit culture and history.

“It was a timely session, and our teachers were really open to learning more about FNMI culture,” said Chris Zarski, STAR Catholic Director of Instruction and Staff Development.

STAR Catholic’s FNMI Learning Day, saw more than 60 sessions and presentations led by First Nations leaders from the bands making up Maskwacis, as well as from

Edmonton Catholic Schools, the Maskwacis Cultural College, and Maskwacis Museum. The sessions varied from blanket exercises that give a powerful narrative recounting of Indigenous people’s history since European settlement, to a wide range of elder-led discussions, to a sweat lodge ceremony and a tipi raising.

All aimed at increasing understanding of Indigenous culture and improving academic outcomes for FNMI students in STAR Catholic, Learning Day saw recently forged partnerships come together with a common focus.

“We began a partnership a short time ago with Nipisihkopahk Education Authority in Samson Cree Nation and Miyo Wahkotowin in Ermineskin Cree Nation,” said Dr. Troy Davies, Superintendent. “Shared learning experiences have grown from those wonderful initial meetings and we are excited to see how these relationships will

Continued on next page

strengthen even more as we move forward. We are overwhelmed by the success and the openness that was witnessed at this Learning Day.”

There are many connections between Catholic education and Indigenous traditions, especially in regards to God and devotion to faith, and it’s something keynote speaker Gary Gagnon spoke to.

“How lucky we are to be able to talk about Creator, about God. How lucky we are to be able to teach young minds, but above all young hearts, about faith. I think we really do have a true opportunity to form beautiful human beings. When they need these tools, they’ll have that sense of spirit,” said Gagnon, who also serves as Edmonton Catholic School District Cultural Facilitator.



STAR Catholic staff took part in tipi raisings, as part of a First Nations, Metis and Inuit focused STAR Catholic School Division Learning Day Sept. 29 in Ponoka. (Vince Burke/ STAR Catholic)

Much of the conversation through the many sessions touched upon reconciliation, as Superintendent Davies led the day by reading Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s 2008 apology, on behalf of the Government of Canada, for the Residential Schools system.

“As much as we can acknowledge the past, we can never forget it, but how do we move forward? It’s a day like this. It is opening up to the communities around us,” said Gagnon.

Zarski said that in the weeks since Learning Day, feedback has been extremely positive as staff are ready to continue learning more about Indigenous culture and find ways to authentically incorporate it in the classroom.

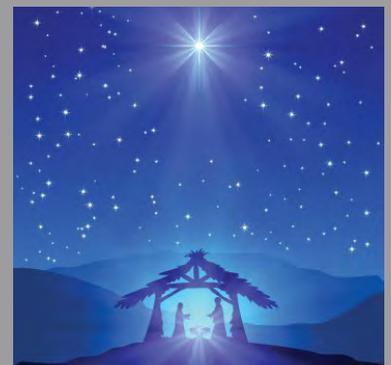
“There was a really positive energy throughout the day. It’s an energy our staff have taken back to their schools,” she said. “Many elders and presenters have also told us that it’s the first time they have sat down in a non-formal way with so many teachers and shared. And, that relationship is one that has been a good start for teachers too, as many now feel better prepared to bring an elder into the classroom to share these stories and culture with students.”



St. Augustine School Principal Kevin Prediger takes part in ceremonial smudging, as part of a First Nations, Metis and Inuit focused STAR Catholic School Division Learning Day Sept. 29 in Ponoka. (Vince Burke/ STAR Catholic)

“Moonless darkness stands between. Past, the past, no more be seen! But the Bethlehem star may lead me to the sight of Him who freed me from the self that I have been. Make me pure, Lord: Thou art Holy; Make me meek, Lord: Thou wert lowly; Now beginning, and always, now begin, on Christmas day.”

(By Gerard Manley Hopkins, 1844-1889.)



Update from Executive Director

Catholic schools, like the Church, grow out of a desire of people who see the testimony of witnesses

By Dean Sarnecki, ACSTA Executive Director

On December 2, 2017, on his flight home to Rome from Myanmar and Bangladesh Pope Francis, as has become his custom, held a press conference on the plane for journalists flying with him. Neither country in this visit has a large Catholic population and the journalists tried hard to move the pope away from interfaith dialogue and peaceful plurality that His Holiness feels is important to topics more “newsworthy” for their readers. The pope insisted however that his comments remain focused on the goals of his trip – religious freedom and expression in regions where Christians are a minority.

While reading the transcripts of the news conference I was struck by one question and the pope’s response. Below, in its entirety, is the translation of the question and His Holiness’ response:

Question from the group of journalists from

France: *Some are opposed to inter-religious dialogue and evangelization. During this trip you have spoken of dialogue for building peace. But, what is the priority? Evangelizing or dialoguing for peace? Because to evangelize means bringing about conversions that provoke tension and sometimes provoke conflicts between believers. So, what is the priority, evangelizing or dialoguing?*

Pope Francis: *“First distinction: evangelizing is not making proselytism. The Church grows not for proselytism but for attraction, that is for testimony, this was said by Pope Benedict XVI. What is evangelization like? Living the Gospel and bearing witness to how one lives the Gospel, witnessing to the Beatitudes, giving testimony to Matthew 25, the Good Samaritan, forgiving 70 times 7 and in this witness the Holy Spirit works and there are conversions, but we are not very enthusiastic to make conversions immediately. If they come, they wait, you speak, your tradition... seeking that a conversion be the answer to something that the Holy Spirit has moved in my heart before the witness of the Christians.”*

“During the lunch I had with the young people at World Youth Day in Krakow, 15 or so young people from the entire world, one of them asked me this question: what do I have to say to a classmate at the university, a friend, good, but he is atheist... what do I have to say to change him, to convert him? The answer was this: the last thing you have to do is say something. You live your Gospel and if he asks you why you do this, you can explain why you do it. And let the Holy Spirit activate him. This is the strength and the meekness of the Holy Spirit in the conversion. It is not a mental convincing, with apologetics,

with reason, it is the Spirit that makes the vocation. We are witnesses, witnesses of the Gospel. ‘Testimony’ is a Greek word that means martyr. Every day martyrdom, martyrdom also of blood, when it arrives. And your question: what is the priority, peace or conversion? But when you live with testimony and respect, you make peace. Peace starts to break down in this field when proselytism begins and there are so many ways of proselytism and this is not the Gospel. I don’t know if I answered.”



Catholic schools, like the whole Church, grow out of a desire of people who are seeking, searching, for meaning and purpose. Pope Francis is reminding us that far more than intellectual discourse and fancy arguments that leads most people to conversion; it is more likely that people are drawn to our schools and church when they see and hear the testimony of Christian witnesses (Greek *martureó* – martyr or testimony of a martyr). Upon hearing the testimony of witnesses they are drawn to be a part of the community of faith that shares that belief and lives it.

Catholic schools, and teachers, then are heralds of good news, evangelizers, testifiers, witnesses to Christ, offering an invitation to join the King in an eternal embrace of love. Catholic schools, by their very nature, reveal God’s eternal love, and invitation to a heavenly kingdom; one that exists now and forever. Pope Francis provides a list of scripture examples of evangelization or ‘attraction: forgiving, living the gospels and the beatitudes.

Why are so many people with limited or no religious background or experience coming to our schools? Catholic schools offer an invitation to all to a perspective on life that is counter cultural (communal and spiritual), an anthropology that is unique (we are gifts from God and worthy of dignity and respect), and eternal in love. They encounter witnesses and they “come and see” (John 1:35-51) what witnesses have already found. All staff in Catholic schools, all are witnesses and your lives are a testimony to this faith. You are called to be martyrs – not an easy task but the reward is priceless!

Toonies for Tuition logo design and poster contest

Submitted by: CCSTA



Are you a student who loves design?

Are you a graphic designer?

We want to see your creations!

Are you an artist?

The Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association (CCSTA) is holding a Toonies for Tuition logo design and poster contest which will run from December 1 to February 28, 2018. The design contest is open to all students enrolled in a Catholic school in Canada who may want to show their creative artistic abilities.

To help promote the CCSTA Toonies for Tuition initiative, we're reaching out to young artists from across the country to get creative and design a Toonies for Tuition logo and poster that speaks to the cause.

Our Toonies for Tuition program is a fundraising initiative to raise funds for the CCSTA Endowment Fund. This fund provides funding to students from across Canada who have to pay tuition to attend a Catholic school. These bursaries help to cover the financial restraints of attending elementary or high school where Catholic education is only partially funded by the government or not at all.

And this funding happens thanks to Toonies for Tuition.

About the Contest

The contest is open to all students enrolled in a Catholic school in Canada and they can be in JK or Grade 12 and everything in between.

"We know that the best people to ask for help on the design are our students," says CCSTA President Marino Gazzola. "We want the poster to be vibrant, bold and grab your attention. There are so many creative students in every single school, and we can't wait to see what they develop." The winning designer can use it for their portfolio, and CCSTA will happily provide a referral letter for this contribution. The contest will run from December

1, 2017 to February 28, 2018 and the winner will be announced in March. The winner will receive a Best Buy gift card for \$200. And if a class collaborates on the logo and poster design and wins, we will provide a \$400 Best Buy gift card.

Poster and Logo Specs

Here is the previous poster and it's in need of an update (we can say that because we designed it!) http://www.ccsta.ca/images/Endowment_Fund_and_Toonies/Toonies-Poster-No-Date.pdf

The poster design specs need to include the following:

- CCSTA Toonies for Tuition.
- For more information, go to www.ccsta.ca.
- Charitable receipts will be issued for donations greater than \$20.
- Donations can be made on-line or by cheque.
- Colours should include red, blue and white (CCSTA colours).
- Otherwise, we're open to suggestions on wording and the design itself.

The Toonies for Tuition logo design specs include:

- A transparent background.
- We're open to colours, but would like it to complement the CCSTA branding.
- Any images used must not be copyright.

We're looking forward to seeing what's created, and if you have any questions, you can reach out to us at ccsta@ocsb.ca. Please submit your entry to that email address.

Contest closes Feb. 28, 2018 and the winning entry will be announced the end of March, 2018.

Curricular Resources Development Workshop 2017

By ACSTA & Development and Peace



Development and Peace - Caritas Canada - held their second workshop for the Development of Curricular Materials on Global Social Justice Issues, in Calgary at St. Mary's University from July 3-7, 2017.



The theme was “Approaches to Social Justice”, with food sovereignty as the focus of the created lesson plans.

ACSTA President Adriana LaGrange was on hand for a portion of the workshop to speak to teachers on the role and importance of the Catholic trustee and of Catholic education.

A special thank you goes out to Christina Kruszewski, Catholic Schools Program Officer for Development and Peace for inviting Adriana, and for providing the ACSTA with photos.

The ACSTA values greatly its partnership with Development & Peace and looks forward to continuing work in the future.

To access curricular resources on social justice issues from Development & Peace, visit this link: <https://www.dev.p.org/en/curricular>.



ACSTA President Adriana LaGrange speaking to workshop participants in Calgary

Development and Peace, in partnership with the Alberta Catholic Schools Trustees' Association (ACSTA), invited Catholic educators from across the province to come together to produce global social justice resources that were faith-based, aligned with Alberta Education curriculum, accessible and permeable across subjects and accessible.



ACSTA AGM & Convention 2017 Awards

Appreciation Award



Sara Farid

Appreciation Award



Fr. Eric Nelson

Appreciation Award



John Witschen

Appreciation Award



Dr. Gerry Turcotte

Justice Kevin Feehan Catholic Education Scholarship



Emily Frost (centre) accepting award from Justice Kevin Feehan (left) his wife Mona Lee (second from left) and the Dentons team, Robert Murray (right) and Anna Loparco (second from right).

Appreciation Award



Most Rev. Mark Hagemoen

Continued on next page

Meritorious Service Award



Kelly Henderson

Meritorious Service Award



Gemma Christie

Honourary Life Award



Ken Loehndorf

Honourary Life Award



Bishop Emeritus Henry

Honourary Life Award



Dr. Garry Andrews

St. Thomas More Award
(For Retiring Directors)



Left-Right - Michelle Lamer accepting on behalf of Susan Kathol (STAR Catholic), John Tomkinson (STAR Catholic), Anne Marie Watson accepting on behalf of Liam McNiff (Red Deer Catholic), Dana Kentner (Living Waters), Kelly Henderson (Lakeland Catholic), Judy Lane (Holy Spirit), Margaret Michaud accepting on behalf of Fay Cailliau (Holy Family), Gerald Bernakevitch (Evergreen Catholic), Ron Schreiber (Christ the Redeemer), Peter Teppler (Calgary Catholic) - Not in Photo - Chantal Monfette (Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest), Karen Doucet (Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord), Larry Kowalczyk (Edmonton Catholic).

Continued on next page

10 Year Service Award



In no particular order, some missing from photos - Darrell Ghostkeeper, Living Waters CRD, Peter Grad, Medicine Hat CSRD, Rhonda Lafrance, St. Paul ERD, Adriana LaGrange, Red Deer CRS, Diane Lavoie, Holy Family CRD, Carmelle Lizee, Holy Family CRD, Diane MacKay, Red Deer CRS, Mary Martin, Calgary CSSD, Keith McGrath, Fort McMurray RCSSD, Margaret Michaud, Holy Family CRD, Cindy Olsen, Edmonton CSSD, Terry O'Donnell, Holy Spirit RCSRD, Mario Paradis, Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest, Danny Ponjavic, Holy, Spirit RCSRD, Harry Salm, Christ the Redeemer CSRD, Irene Sawyer, Living Waters CRD, Jamie Schoorlemmer, Grande Prairie RCSSD, Paula Scott, Lloydminster RCSSD, Bob Spitzig, Holy Spirit RCSRD, Kelly Whalen, Holy Family CRD, Beatrice Wright, Holy Family CRD, Eldon Wyant, Grande Prairie RCSSD, Richard Yaceyko, Evergreen CSRD, Marilyn Bergstra, Edmonton CSSD, Liam McNiff, Red Deer CRS.

25 Year Service Award



Gerald Bernakevitch,
Evergreen CSRD

25 Year Service Award



Mary Anne Penner,
Lakeland RCSSD

25 Year Service Award



Chantal Monfette,
Conseil scolaire du Nord-Ouest

20 Year Service Award



Cathy Proulx
Greater St. Albert RCSSD



Ron McKay
Evergreen CSRD

15 Year Service Award



(L to R) Caren Mueller, Evergreen CSRD,
Vicky Lefebvre, Lakeland RCSSD