



THE CATHOLIC DIMENSION

Speaking of Catholic Education in
Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon

Published by the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association

June 2020

A Summer Prayer

Father, Creator of all,
thank You for summer!
Thank you for the warmth of the sun
and the increased daylight.
Thank You for the beauty I see all around me
and for the opportunity to be outside
and enjoy Your creation.
Thank You for the increased time I have
to be with my friends and family,
and for the more casual pace
of the summer season.

Draw me closer to You this summer.
Teach me how I can pray
no matter where I am
or what I am doing.
Warm my soul
with the awareness of Your presence
and light my path
with Your Word and Counsel.
As I enjoy Your creation,
create in me a pure heart
and a hunger and a thirst for You.

Amen.



Author: Unknown



President's Message



**Submitted by: Serena Shaw
ACSTA President**

I have had the privilege to work with Dean Sarnecki for the last five years; three years as a Director on the Board of Directors at ACSTA and the last two years as President. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dean publicly on behalf of the Board as well as the entire membership.

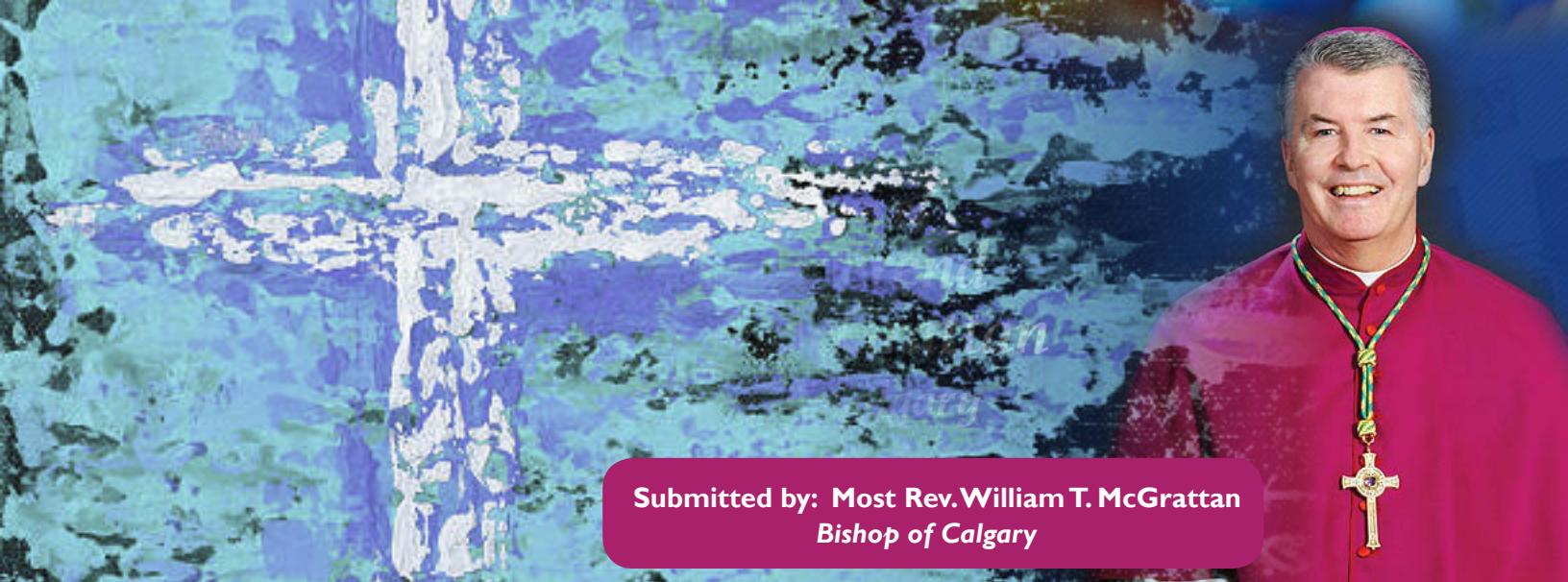
Dean was brought on as the Executive Director in 2012. My understanding is that a large part of his mandate was to increase the visibility and influence of ACSTA. During our February Board meeting, it was acknowledged by the Board that he had succeeded in this very important work. Both through his own actions, and leadership of his staff, Dean has moved ACSTA forward during his time as Executive Director, and for that we are blessed.

Dean relishes in creating relationships, and has been able to leverage this passion for the betterment of our Association. He maintained, strengthened and at times created relationships, always with the focus on celebrating, preserving, promoting and enhancing Catholic education. In his role with ACSTA he spent much time working with the Bishops and Catholic Superintendents in Alberta, Northwest Territories and the Yukon. Dean always made himself available not only to member Boards but individual trustees as well. He also fostered close relationships with those in the government of the day. It is so important that we work with other stakeholders in Education and Dean made this a large focus of his work.

Dean has worked with three Presidents: Tony Sykora, Adriana LaGrange and myself. He has seen the provincial government change twice, and worked with five different Education Ministers and their staff. The number of Directors at the ACSTA table are too many to count. Dean has worked with a number of staff at over the years and will end his time with ACSTA with an amazing team that has supported him well.

Dean, we will miss you and everything you brought to our Association. We wish you well. We expect that you will continue in your work as a champion for publicly funded Catholic Education and that our paths will cross again.

May God go with you and bless you. We at ACSTA pray for success in all you do, and for health and happiness for you and your entire family. Go in peace.



**Submitted by: Most Rev. William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary**

"Spirit of Catholicism" Catholic School

The five essential marks of a Catholic School were outlined by Most Rev. Michael Miller in his document entitled, *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*. It continues to be an important reference work in promoting the mission of our Catholic schools in Alberta and was highlighted during Catholic Education Week in Alberta this past May through the work of GrACE.

The fourth essential mark is that, "The 'spirit of Catholicism' should permeate the entire curriculum." It begins with a vision which is rooted in the sacredness of each child. Catholic education must envision the authentic human development of children as a sacred path entrusted to them by God. It begins in the family home with parents as the first educators of their children, continues in the Catholic school and matures through participation in a parish community and ultimately can become a witness of Catholic faith in society.

Catholic Education must always place the child at the center of its mission, a unique person created by God who is called to grow spiritually, intellectually, morally, and physically. The support of a student's growth in these areas is identified in the Congregation for Catholic Education's document, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, "The Catholic School sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school. ... For this reason the Catholic school, in committing itself to the development of the whole person, does so ... in the awareness that all human values find their fulfilment and unity in Christ." (No. 9)

Our Catholic schools must always be Christocentric, founded upon the person of Christ and His teachings. The integration of Catholic values and teachings should also be evident across all curriculum, pastoral activities and opportunities for spiritual development and missionary outreach, both locally and globally. The permeation of these dimensions of Catholic Education combined with the support of family life and parish involvement help students to grow in human and moral virtues (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "CCC", 1804, 1810-1811), the cardinal virtues (CCC, 1805 - 1809) and the theological virtues (CCC, 1812 – 1829).

The students who attend our Catholic schools become living signs of hope for our world now and in the future. They possess the potential to become a leaven in society. Through the gift of their faith, the development of Christian virtues, they become a living mission for the evangelization of our society and in promoting the common good for all. This is why the permeation of a "spirit of Catholicism" is essential in every Catholic school community.



Reverend Michael Mireau
May 11, 1972 - September 22, 2014

'Meeting Students Where They are At'

Submitted by:
Michelle Lamer, Board Chair
St. Thomas Aquinas RCSSD



Several years have passed since Fr. Mike (Catfish) Mireau was the parish priest at St. Michael Church, Leduc. This was his first parish and he was 'superhero' ready to shepherd when he arrived in 2004. He was super quick witted and passionate! His homilies at times were stand-up comedy linked to pop culture and Star Wars that brought a wide-eyed look from some. After the laughs, he purposefully led back to the gospel message, touching our hearts and always ending with 'God is Love' (*1 John 4:8*). Fr. Mike was a brilliant academic, excellent communicator and wonderful storyteller. On the topic of perseverance he related it to changing the alternator on his Hyundai and described it with great fun, detail and agonizing strain!

Fr. Mike captured the hearts of students at our Catholic Schools here in Leduc. He professed his support of Catholic education as often as he could – he reminded parents during the baptism of their child the importance of educating their children through a Catholic school. I was so grateful to him for making this claim and reminding us all that Catholic schools are an extension of the parish and contribute to the mission of the church. Because of his easy connection to young people he spent a lot of time at the schools. Mass at all schools was a big commitment but when he committed to regular confession times, the commitment could be for many hours. He offered confession at Christ the King Jr/Sr High School in Leduc as often as he could. Confession time was connection time, Fr. Mike was easy to talk to – his heart knew their struggles.

Fr. Mike was ahead of his time in using social media. He used it to teach and share the Catholic faith. His website <http://fathercatfish.com/> has so many resources; videos, homilies, many interesting papers - 'History of the Entire Universe' and 'God is Love' - M.Div. Synthesis 2001, – excellent for families, Catholic school teachers and students! He spoke openly about his cancer and documented it on his site. After his passing our parish and school communities honoured him in different ways. A student initiated a park bench in his memory which is situated near the church overlooking Telford Lake. At Christ the King School families support an annual monetary award with a beautifully carved cross to a student who demonstrates Fr. Mike's virtue of strong faith and staying true to one's self, especially when it is difficult and lonely. At Fr. Leduc Catholic School, the school motto is 'God is Love'. Our Catholic schools are forever grateful to parish priests who accompany students and meet them where they are at – these are God moments. We know grace will take care of the rest and students will draw on their Catholic education experience, recognizing the love of Christ in their own faith journey.



2019 Fr. Mike Mireau Award presentation
at Christ the King School, Leduc



Cross crafted by
St. Michael Parishioner



"To Shape Hearts"

My wife Crystal received a text from a colleague asking, "What has COVID-19 taught you about living your life?" After a recent event at my children's school, I asked a similar question: "What has COVID-19 taught us about Catholic education?"

My children attend a local Catholic school in Edmonton. The school's administrator was turning fifty years of age and a parent arranged a vehicle parade past the school to toast the principal. People could hang signs and balloons out their windows to offer best wishes for our instructional leader. I felt strange about celebrating the principal's birthday—"Isn't that her private life?"—and wasn't sure if we'd take part in the motorcade. However, because we live close to the school and saw cars and SUVs lining up for the tour, the kids and I dashed for our minivan and joined the end of the thirty vehicle procession. By the time we slowly drove past the school—the educators sat socially-distanced in a large circle in front of the school eating birthday cake—there wasn't a dry eye amongst the staff nor in our minivan. Our drive-by celebration became more than an acknowledgement of a birthdate. In that instant, at least for me, it was a grace-filled moment where we as a school community shared our appreciation and love for each other. We all paraded to offer our best wishes, but what we left with was a sense of the deep bond between the teachers and our children—and how the slow suffocating presence of the coronavirus would not stamp out that bond.

As an educator, I don't want that experience to fall into sentimentalism, leaving me awash with feelings similar to those felt when watching a Hallmark

**Submitted by : Dr. Matt Hoven
Kule Chair of Catholic Religious Education
St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta**

Channel movie. Instead, I believe that the experience gave me a glimpse into another dimension of a Catholic school. Yes, we need to pass on knowledge—and some of that continues remotely for our kids today—but, as Pope Benedict declared in 2005, educators also need to "shape hearts." That reality—the love of those teachers for their students—was both felt and seen in our motorcade experience.

The challenge is to not fall prey to mere sentiment, but to harness a love that can drive the purpose of the school. This requires an intentional plan that ensures that the love of Christ is the beating heart of the classroom. Colleagues at Creighton University—a Jesuit institution in Omaha, Nebraska—have written an accessible book about Catholic identity in schools. Led by Prof. Max Engel, the NCEA publication spells out how educational leaders can name, claim, and build a Catholic identity within their schools. It includes how to support and develop staff's growth in faith, along with that of students and families. It's an example of American pragmatism that can give substance to what I felt in that school parade last month.

"What has COVID-19 taught us about Catholic education?" That it's needed more than ever. By the grace of God, let's keep working at making it better than ever.

Engel, Max, et al., (2020) *Your School's Catholic Identity: Name it, Claim it, and Build on it*. National Catholic Educational Association: Arlington, VA. Find it at: <https://www.ncea.org/>



Edmonton Catholic Schools

Catholic Education Week

His Grace and Trustees helping assemble food hampers for ECSD families in need.



Although classes have been cancelled, the need for nutritious food for families remains. As a new way to serve our students, the Edmonton Catholic School Division has been delivering food hampers to ECSD families in need. These hampers are provided to families whose students accessed our nutrition program at participating schools prior to classes being cancelled and will be provided every two weeks until the end of the school year. The initial hamper deliveries began on April 6, with 296 families receiving fruits, vegetables and non-perishable food items. Trustees have assembled many of these hampers and on Catholic Education Week, Archbishop Richard Smith, worked with Trustees assembling an additional 400 hampers and over 1,200 hampers have been assembled since April for our families. These hampers are all made possible through the use of allocated funds that would have been used to support nutrition programming via various funding organizations - Alberta Education Nutrition Program, Breakfast for Learning, Breakfast Club of Canada and the Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation. To date, our Division has made 1900 hampers which consists of two boxes per family which is the equivalent of 3800 boxes of perishable and non perishable food. With the help of over 20 selfless volunteers, we truly are #ECSDfaithinspires. If you would like to help struggling families during this pandemic, please visit www.ecsfoundation.ca.



Submitted by:

Bonnie Annicchiarico, Ph.D
Director | GrACE

Just Do It!

***For we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.* Acts 4:21**

GrACE is quickly approaching the culmination of year 2 of its formation and existence. What began as a mustard seed has truly moved mountains and reflects Jesus' proclamation that "nothing will be impossible for you" if you have faith (Matthew 17:20). The faith of Alberta's Bishops, Alberta's Catholic School trustees and Alberta's Catholic School superintendents began with trust, grew with hope and has been sustained in prayer. GrACE seeks to unite, engage, educate and communicate with one voice on behalf of Catholic education. These four goals have been front and center and will continue to set direction in the years to come.



Unite: Summit 2019



Engage: CWL Community Engagement

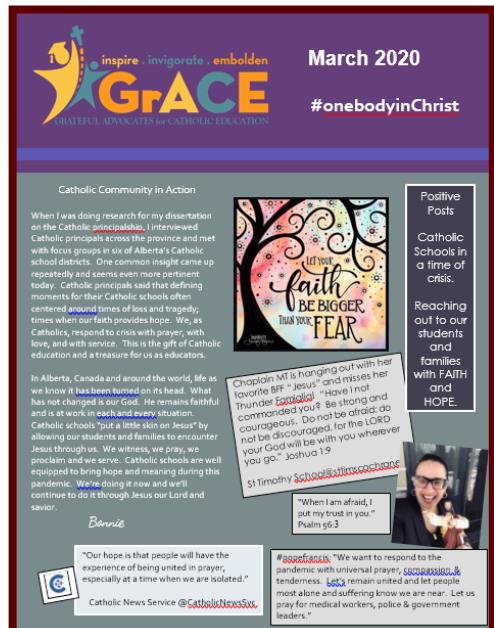
We have been united. Prayer has gathered Catholic Education through intentions of the faithful, a province-wide novena and provincial prayer events throughout Catholic Education Week. We united at the "Strengthening the Why" GrACE provincial summit with 100 advocates together in Leduc and we have united in our regional GrACE meetings.

We have been engaged. Through workshops and regional meetings, 100% of our Catholic and Francophone School Districts and dioceses have been part of dialogue and information sessions about Catholic Education. Data to date confirms more than 2,300 Albertans have been part of a GrACE focused presentation or event.

We have educated. Education has been ongoing as we shared the history, statistics, research and the 5 marks of Catholic Education. Catholic School districts have created videos and resources to enhance and deepen understanding of Catholic education. Advocacy ideas and tools have been generated and distributed.

We have communicated. Monthly newsletters, social media and organizational updates have allowed GrACE to share news, views and build understanding. Distribution reaches a GrACE contact list of +420 as well as the membership of CCSSA, ACSTA and diocesan pastoral centers. Many school districts, parishes and organizations have included GrACE on their websites and in their information bulletins. Word of GrACE is expanding. Common language and understanding around GrACE is deepening.

If year one was characterized by enthusiasm and a desire to get started, year two has been more about getting “boots on the ground” and discerning in each GrACE group how to move forward. Year 2 has generated local discussions about who, what and where. The unexpected Corona Virus displaced plans that had been previously determined and raised the issue of what Catholic schools in general and GrACE specifically might look like in the future. What then, will year 3 look like? What will inspire, invigorate and embolden advocates in 2020-2021?



The newsletter header features the GrACE logo with the tagline "inspire . invigorate . embolden". The title "March 2020" and the hashtag "#onebodyinChrist" are prominently displayed. The content includes several columns: "Catholic Community in Action" with an interview with Bonnie; "Positive Posts" featuring a quote from St. Timothy School; "Reaching out to our students and families with FAITH and HOPE" with a photo of a student; "Catholic News Service @CatholicNewsService" with a quote from #goodfriday; and a "Communicate: GrACE newsletter" section at the bottom.

Communicate: GrACE newsletter

The Five Marks of a Catholic School



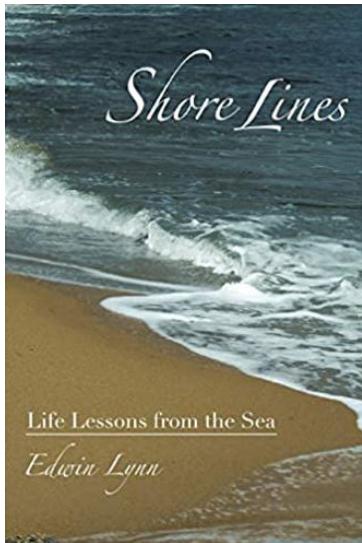
Educate: The 5 Marks of a Catholic School

Just do it! (With apologies to NIKE), Year 3 challenges us to act our way into knowing and understanding. The adage “behavior before belief” seems appropriate here. You may not have all the answers yet; you may not be certain what next step is best; you may not know who else is going to join you. Despite the uncertainty, start somewhere. You have enough information, tools, ideas and resources. Be a leader; be an integral part of the team. If you are reading this article, you most certainly are one of the leaders who must respond to this call to action. Begin with your passion and your unwavering support for Catholic education and let it lead to one event, one action, one step forward. You’ve heard the good news. You know the value and necessity of Catholic Education. The challenge to you now is to do as the early Church apostles did. Let the Holy Spirit fire you up so that you too will soon say, “we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard”.

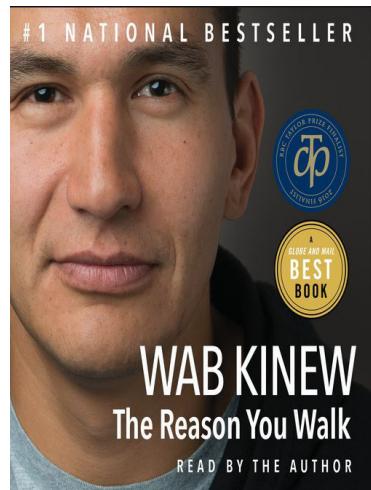


Book Reviews

A few book selections for summer reading:



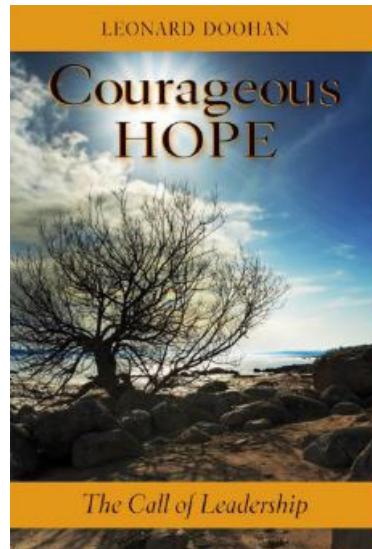
Courageous Hope: The Call of Leadership: Outlines a spirituality of leadership that challenges leaders to present a vision of hope to excite and empower others, to be prophets, mystics, charismatics, and healers to transform society and to effectively respond to the world that is desperate for leaders of hope.



The Reason You Walk: Kinew writes affectingly of his own struggles in his twenties to find the right path, eventually giving up a self-destructive lifestyle to passionately pursue music and martial arts. From his unique vantage point, he offers an inside view of what it means to be an educated aboriginal living in a country that is just beginning to wake up to its aboriginal history and living presence.

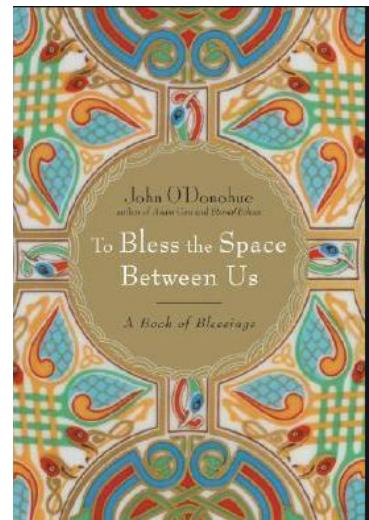
Shore Lines: Life Lessons From the Sea: In 27 short essays divided into three sections -Attitude, Adversity, and Gratitude, Edwin Lynn creates a connection between the seaside environment and human experiences from which we can all learn important life lessons.

The Name of God Is Mercy: Pope Francis here invites all humanity to an intimate and personal dialogue on the subject closest to his heart - mercy - which has long been the cornerstone of his faith and is now the central teaching of his papacy.



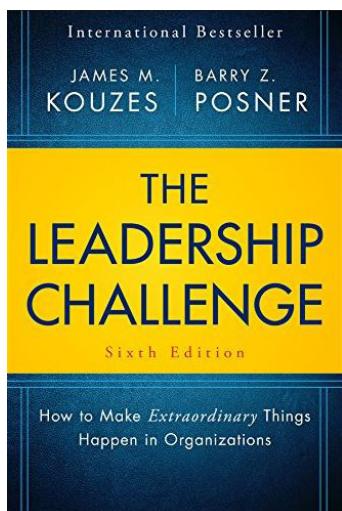
POPE
FRANCIS
THE NAME
OF GOD
IS MERCY

To Bless the Space Between Us: A beautiful collection of blessings to help readers through both the everyday and the extraordinary events of their lives.



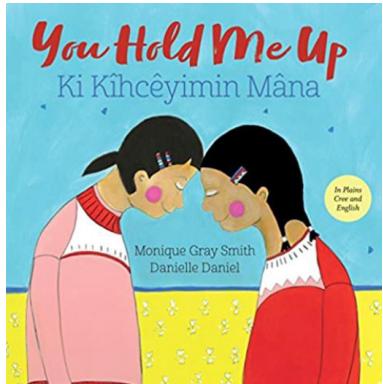
The Leadership Challenge: How to Make Extraordinary Things Happen in Organizations:

The Leadership Challenge is the gold-standard manual for effective leadership, grounded in research and written by the premier authorities in the field. A good leader gets things done; a great leader aspires, inspires, and achieves more. This book highlights the differences between good and great, and shows you how to bridge the chasm between getting things done and making things happen.

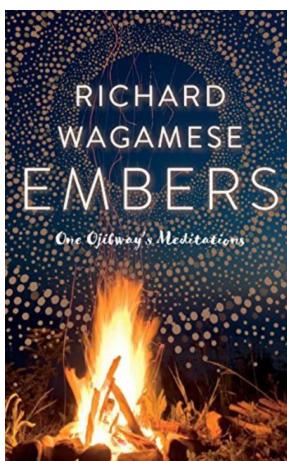


You Hold Me Up:

You Hold Me Up to prompt a dialogue among young people, their care providers and educators about reconciliation and the importance of the connections children make with their friends, classmates and families. This is a foundational book about building relationships, fostering empathy and encouraging respect between peers, starting with our littlest citizens.

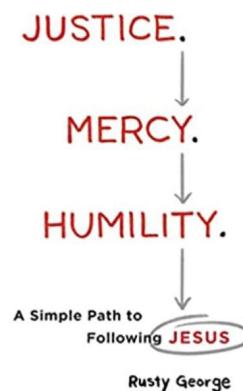


Beautiful Hands: A deeply personal book for both the author and illustrator, this stunning page-turner is filled with illustrations created entirely from the handprints of the author's and illustrator's family members. What will your beautiful hand do today?



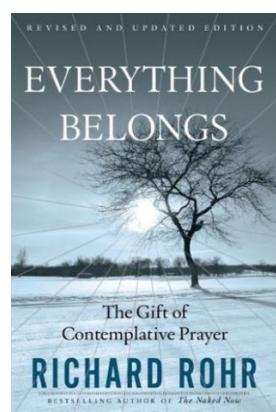
Embers: Honest, evocative and articulate, Wagamese explores the various manifestations of grief, joy, recovery, beauty, gratitude, physicality and spirituality—concepts many find hard to express. But for Wagamese, spirituality is multifaceted. Within these pages, readers will find hard-won and concrete wisdom on how to feel the joy in the everyday things.

Justice. Mercy. Humility.: A Simple Path to Following Jesus: Pastor Rusty George shares the simplicity of what God desires from us. Living a faithful life should not be a chore, and George teaches how to put away our checklists and walk humbly according to God's will for our lives.



Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer:

This bestselling book of the renowned Franciscan challenges people to move beyond the comfort of a settled life toward an understanding of themselves that is rooted in their connection to God. Only when they rest in God can they find the certainty and the freedom to become all that they can be. Contemplation has its place at the heart of Christianity, a place that allows people to experience how "everything belongs."



Pondering *the* Precious Moments

This past year, before all of the Covid-19 mayhem began, some of us were sitting around the staff room at lunchtime one day. Somehow the stars had aligned and there was a bigger group of us than usual. As can sometimes happen in a Catholic school, the conversation turned to the topic of religion and God, and while I can't remember the details of what we talked about, I do remember that a sense of sacred space grew between all of us. As we talked and shared our thoughts, the presence of the Spirit seemed tangible. When the bell went at the end of the lunch hour, someone said, "That was great!" We left feeling alive and ready to enter into the rest of the day.

A lot has been written about the value of Catholic Education but, in this reflection, I am choosing to focus on what some might call a more selfish end: how working in Catholic Schools has fed me as a Teacher/ Chaplain. I grew up in Winnipeg, where my parents couldn't afford to send me to the private Catholic girls' school. It wasn't until I began teaching that I had any knowledge of the inner workings of Catholic School Districts and it was only when I came to Edmonton Catholic as a Religious Sister that I really appreciated the opportunities that we have as Catholic educators.

The fact that staffroom chitchat can quickly turn to beautiful discussions about God is just one of the ways that I often find myself spiritually nourished in my work. Every now and then, students will write or say something that makes my heart smile as I relish the wisdom of their insights. For a Religion assignment, one student wrote: "God for me is not just a person, He is everything. God is love, hope, faith. I am happy and proud to believe in God." Another printed: "God is in my heart. I would be just a human without God in my life, but now I'm a human of God with Him in me."



Submitted by:
Sr. Michelle Langlois, FCJ

A "human of God": I love that turn of phrase! And a third from a student who was born in South Sudan: "What I drew here is what God looks like to me. It is a face with no eyes, mouth or lips. Just a face full of colour: different colours." What a joy to see the Holy Spirit alive and flowing through our young people today!

And the most profound conversations about God seem to happen in the most unexpected of places. Returning from a field trip last year I sat with a group of students that I didn't know very well. A question came up about whether or not God used natural disasters to punish people. A thoughtful discussion ensued and I remember thinking how strange and wonderful it was for that discourse to happen on a school bus of all places. And yet, it's often been outside the classroom where students have turned to me and suddenly asked about my life as a Religious Sister and what it's like to live in a church (which we don't, by the way.)

In the course of our daily school routines throughout the year, there are many other moments that will suddenly bring our minds, and perhaps our hearts, back to God: watching a student pause in the chapel doorway to make the sign of the Cross, another sharing about the peace that came into her heart during a class prayer, a grandson requesting that we pray for an ill grandparent. Do I remember to stop and recognize these events as the precious gems that they are? I hope, at least sometimes, that I do.

Cardinal Bishop Luis Tagle has referred to teenagers as our unconventional prophets and evangelizers. It is time well spent to make the space every so often to sit and ponder how God is nourishing us through the students and staff that we meet in our Catholic Schools. What a gift to meet the Lord each day in buildings where God is actively welcomed. Let us pray that we will never lose sight of the varied ways God continues to bless us!

World Catholic Education Day

Minister LaGrange

May 21, 2020

Minister of Education Adriana LaGrange issued the following statement on World Catholic Education Day:

“Every year, 40 days after Easter on Ascension Thursday, Catholics around the globe celebrate World Catholic Education Day. It is a time to pause, reflect and pray on the gift that is Catholic education.



“Today we join with our Catholic educators, students and parents to recognize the distinctive academic and spiritual contributions Catholic education makes within our diverse society. As Albertans, we are thankful for choice in education that enables parents to give their children a faith-based learning environment.

“With family homes replacing classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic, Albertans in our Catholic education system continue to find strength together. On this special day, they are wearing blue and uniting in prayer and gratitude for Catholic schools.

“To all Catholic educators and families, I thank you for doing your part to ensure the more than 176,000 students who attend our Catholic schools continue to learn and grow in faith and fellowship during this challenging time.”

Catholic Education Week

United in Prayer and Grateful for Catholic Schools

May 18 - 22, 2020

Pape François  @Pontifex_fr · May 19
Quand nous prenons conscience du reflet de Dieu qui se trouve dans tout ce qui existe, le cœur expérimente le désir d'adorer le Seigneur pour toutes ses créatures, et avec ell. #LaudatoSi5

Adriana LaGrange  @AdrianaLaGrange · May 21
"Every year, 40 days after Easter on Ascension Thursday, Catholics around the globe celebrate World Catholic Education Day. It is a time to pause, reflect and pray on the gift that is Catholic education." 1/2



#IBelieveinCatholicEd. We are grateful for the support of our clergy, students, teachers, parents, and community. Together we champion Catholic Education @GrACE4cathed @grandinmedia

Catholic Social Services @cssalberta · May 21
Happy World Catholic Education Day to our incredible school partners. We're grateful to celebrate #CatholicEducationWeek alongside you! @EdmCathSchools @STARCatholic @rdcrs @LloydCatholic @GSACRD @EvergreenCSSD @EICSCatholic @ACSTANews

#CatholicEducationWeek



MH Catholic Schools @MHCatholic · May 21
Today is #WorldCatholicEducationDay! Staff student and families are wearing #BlueForCatholicEd. Our daily prayer intention is: Thankful for our teachers, leaders and staff who serve as Gospel witness ❤️



Franco Sud @CSFrancoSud · May 21, 2020
#blueforCatholicEd #ibelieveinCatholicEd #GSACRDproud
Plusieurs membres du personnel de nos écoles catholiques portent le bleu aujourd'hui pour démontrer leur soutien envers l'éducation catholique! #franco
#JeCroisEnLéducationCatholique
#IBelieveinCatholicEd @GrACE4cathed @ACSTANews @CCSTAconnect @calgarydiocese



#JeCroisEnLéducationCatholique



Lord, we thank you for the gift of all teachers and adults who work in our schools who are loving witnesses of their faith to their students. May they continue to share with others their faith journey and invite them into a deeper relationship with You.

St. Mary's U Calgary @StMarysUC · May 18
"The Catholic tradition in Higher Education tries to bring together both reason and faith. The very witness and presence, that we believe in a Creator and a God, informs students as they're taking their courses." - Bishop William McGrattan  #CatholicEducationWeek #CEW2020 #stmu



GRACE @GrACE4cathed · May 20
On Day 3 of Catholic Education Week we thank our Catholic School families. Thank you for keeping your children safe, facilitating learning at home and sharing and instilling faith as they come to know Jesus. We are blessed to work alongside YOU! #IBelieveinCatholicEd



YCS @ycsnwt · May 21
Blessed thanks to our Bishop @CCsR_Preacher for his thoughtful reflection on what it means to be a Catholic Educator and for joining us for our virtual liturgy in celebration of World Catholic Education Day! jonhanseccsr.com/2020/05/21/wor..._pic.twitter.com/gqGt81diYd

Lakeland Catholic School Division @LCSD_150 · May 19
We are so grateful for our priests, bishops and clergy who shepherd us with love. #LCSDJoy #ibelieveincatholicized #CatholicEdPassItOn @GrACE4cathed

Alberta Teachers Association @albertateachers · May 21
Celebrate Catholic Education Week by attending Thursday evening's Virtual Pub Night! Check out the poster below for details.

ACSTA @ACSTANews · May 21
@ACSTANews Board of Directors proudly advocating for #IBelieveinCatholicEd #BlueforCatholicEd @GrACE4cathed



In Alberta, NWT, and Yukon Catholic education is fully publicly funded. It is a gift, that on Ascension Thursday each year, we celebrate this gift and pray for Catholic education throughout the world. We wear blue, the mantle of Mary, to show our support! Please pray with us!

In preparation for Catholic Education Week, @ACSTANews President @seshaw38 and @CCSSAB President @CusackTim share their message-United in Prayer and Grateful for Catholic Schools. Let's celebrate BlueforCatholicEd



ACSTA @ACSTANews · May 19
Joan's legacy of exemplary Catholic educational leadership will serve as a model for years to come. Many will speak of Joan and remember her tender heart, her commitment to excellence, and her witness to the faith. May our prayers reach her heavenly rest. #IBelieveinCatholicEd

ECSD @EdmCathSchools · May 19
As we celebrate Catholic Education Week, we want to honour our former Superintendent Joan Carr, for her dedication and commitment to Catholic education. #ECSdfaitinspires #ibelieveinCatholicEd #CatholicEducationWeek #abed youtube.be/cN1z4q4HkDw

ACSTA @ACSTANews · May 18
"One student wrote: 'God for me is not just a person, He is everything. God is love, hope, faith. I am happy and proud to believe in God.' Another printed: 'God is in my heart.' Grateful to Sr. Michelle @FCJsisters @StThomasMoreECS @EdmCathSchools for her gift of witness."

MH Catholic Schools @MHCatholic · May 22
Wrapping up Catholic Education Week with Sister Vicki Hagel "When I walk into a Catholic school I have a different feeling" ❤️ #IBelieveInCatholicEd #WeAreMHCBE



Catholic Education Week

*Thank you all for your contribution in making
Catholic Education Week and World Catholic Education Day
extra special this year!*

Special thanks to:

Most Reverend William McGrattan, Bishop of Calgary

Most Reverend Richard W. Smith, Archbishop of Edmonton

Most Reverend Paul Terrio, Bishop of Saint Paul

Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas, CSsR, Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan

Most Reverend David Motiuk, Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton

Most Reverend Jon Hansen, CSsR, Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

Most Reverend Hector Vila, Bishop of Whitehorse

Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education

Nicole Williams, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister of Education

Colin Aitchison, Press Secretary, Office of the Minister of Education

Serena Shaw, President - Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association

Jason Schilling, President - The Alberta Teachers' Association

Tim Cusack, President - Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta

Jamie McNamara, Executive Director - Council of Catholic School Superintendent of Alberta

Dr. Bonnie Annicchiarico, Director - Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education

Sr. Michelle Langlois, Faithful Companions of Jesus, Chaplain/Teacher - Edmonton CSSD

Mark Milne, Communications Officer, Media Relations - The Alberta Teachers' Association

All Catholic School Divisions for their outstanding contribution in the celebration and advocacy of Catholic education

French Translation:

Karen Koester, Religious Education Coordinator - Evergreen Catholic Separate School Division

Vanessa Zevallos, Administrative Assistant - Conseil scolaire FrancoSud

Caroline Maillet-Rao, Coordinator - CÉFFA (Council of Catholic Faith Education for Francophone Albertans)

Lorraine Robinson (Conseillère pédagogique en catholicité/Religious Education Consultant)

Marie Gamache-Hauptman



Thankful for Companions on the Journey

You are most likely very familiar with the song: *Companions on the Journey*. For me, this popular song, composed by Carey Landry, was among the first I learned to play on guitar when I was a member of my high school music ministry group. It is a song often used in school celebrations to mark the beginning of a new year or as a sending forth song at year's end. When I hear the lyrics, I often am mindful of the scriptures pertaining to the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13-35) and how we are called to encounter Jesus on our daily journey; seeing Him, revealed through and in one another.

I recently had opportunity to sing (online of course) this well-known song. Given the many challenges that were made manifest because of Covid-19 this year, I was able to experience the song on a deeper level. I would say, I heard the words of this song through fresh ears. Words that reinforced in me, the importance of Catholic community. The following verse: ***We have been gifted with each other, and we are called by the Word of the Lord: to act with justice, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God, to walk humbly with our God,*** comes from ***Micah 6:8*** in so many ways, serves as a mission statement for the journey.

Throughout the challenging journey this year, we have been gifted to walk alongside so many Catholic stakeholders provincially and beyond in responding to God's call. I wish to offer my heartfelt gratitude to our Bishops, the ACSTA, GrACE, and my colleagues in the CCSSA for walking humbly and with great passion in the service of our students, staff, and families this year!



Submitted by: Tim Cusack Ed.D
President, Council of Catholic School Superintendents of Alberta

As we prepare to conclude the 2019-20 academic year, I want to take a moment to express appreciation and gratitude to Jamie McNamara, Executive Director of the CCSSA. Jamie has served our organization with humility, courage, and compassion. His guidance and wisdom have been a gift to each executive team he has supported over the past many years. On behalf of Catholic stakeholders across the province, we acknowledge, and celebrate his many years dedicated service to Catholic Education in Alberta and beyond. Thank you for being our companion along the journey. Well done good and faithful servant!

Catholic Educational Leadership:

A Legacy of Love

As the gigantic 787 Air Canada Dreamliner aircraft touched down and began taxiing on the tarmac of Melbourne, Australia International Airport, my cellphone dinged insistently. With a heavy heart, I knew all too well how those messages would read and I was not prepared to acknowledge their reality; that our great leader Joan Carr had passed. It was too much too soon and I was too far away. Best left unread! My mission the upcoming week was to follow through on a commitment I made with Joan's blessing and I could not allow myself to disappoint her. I prayed silently that Joan, now in the heavenly realm, could please help me to get through my presentation on Catholic educational leadership, alongside 80 scholars from 54 different countries. I couldn't let her down...not now...especially not now. Truly, my heart was broken and could only imagine the grief of my dear colleagues at ECSD. I ached to be with them, but instinctively, I knew Joan was urging me to focus on the presentation and do the best that I could. More than ever, I could not disappoint!

Joan Carr was a champion of Catholic education. She understood leadership with the wisdom and insight that could only be



By: Eugenia Kowalczyk, Ph.D.
ACSTA, *Director of Advocacy*

inspired by the Holy Spirit. Truly God had a plan for Joan and she executed that plan with excellence. Over the years, Joan always began the school year with a leadership meeting. This long standing tradition was filled with inspirational messages that would sustain and nourish our journey. I share with you the ones that have touched my heart and will forever remain as a guiding light:

- » God has called us to be part of a special ministry, the education and formation of the young members of our Catholic Christian community. It is important that we never lose sight of this mission (2016).
- » Help us to speak, think and work with compassion and integrity, to celebrate the good that happens each and every day in Catholic education, to bring hope and mercy to and through everything. Love the children and staff you serve! (2016)
- » We are to love one another! Sharing in our life of grace, our life as Jesus in the world, our actions are devoted to helping teachers, students and parents awaken to and share in the vision of God's love (2017).

» Catholic education is a beacon of hope for our future and we trust it will continue to grow and flourish into the next century and beyond. We look at our Catholic schools not as something we inherit from generations past but as schools that are on loan to us for future generations. We need to be visionaries in our vocations as Catholic educational leaders (2017).

» We are so blessed in our work with students and colleagues where we are able to nurture and live our relationship with Jesus – becoming models of his Gospel teachings, serving as ministers of love, hope and mercy and walking the path forward together in God's love. If we fully grasp this understanding our work as leaders may be truly treasured as something beyond the ordinary (2018).

Kouzes and Posner, in their book *Truth About Leadership* state, "leaders are in love with what they do and the mission they are serving. Leaders make others feel important and are gracious in showing appreciation. Love is the motivation that energizes leaders to give so much." Parker Palmer adds to this understanding by writing, "the power of authentic leadership is found not externally but in the human heart. There is no integrity and honor without fear, no hope or faith, no persistence or courage, no learning or risk taking. Nothing important ever gets done without heart." Indeed the heart beats, nourishing and sustaining life, not only to our physical being but also our spiritual.

My career has allowed me the opportunity of working with truly inspirational educational leaders. Most recently, I have had the opportunity of working with Dean Sarnecki,

Executive Director of ACSTA. Dean exudes a passion for Catholic education that is contagious. Give Dean a microphone and a Powerpoint (with clicker) and you will be swept away for hours, through the historical, political, and even trivial landscape of Catholic education. Words do not adequately describe the passion Dean has for publicly funded Catholic and it is evident in all that he does. During challenging times, and there have been a few, Dean utilizes his ability to build positive relationships to best serve his vocation. God has indeed blessed Dean with this incredible gift. Likewise, God has blessed all of us with the gift of Dean!



Great leaders leave an imprint in our soul and we are forever touched by their grace. Indeed, the final test of a leader is that they leave behind, in others, the conviction and will to carry on. Dean has remained faithful to his calling of serving Catholic education with great conviction and unceasing loyalty. St. Vincent de Paul writes, "if God is the center of your life, no words are necessary. Your mere presence will touch hearts." Dean has touched the heart of many and his advocacy for Catholic education will remain fruitful for many years. Your journey Dean, has not ended, rather, it has just begun. Godspeed!

Our beloved Joan left a legacy of love. Her favorite scripture passage reads, "what the Lord requires is this: to act justly, to love

faithfully and to walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8). Exemplary leaders are able to put words into action; action that is forever etched in the memory of others. Just as I clung to the memory of Joan in Australia drawing on her spiritual support and guidance, many days I find great comfort remembering her words of encouragement and reassurance. In her opening letter for the

2019-2020 school year, Joan shared, “when we let our light shine before others so that they can see and emulate our good works, we give glory to God. As we walk together with the members of our community, we are therefore called to illuminate the path as reflections of Christ’s love and light.” Walk with us Joan, in your legacy of love!



ECSD's new Chief Superintendent, Robert Martin, shares the following:

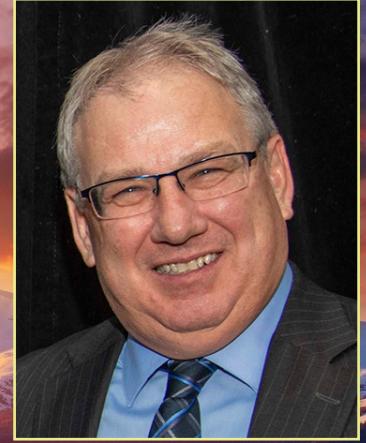
There was no more fitting way for us to begin the celebration of Catholic Education Week than by honouring the great legacy of Joan Carr, who lived out her vocation to Catholic Education by serving the students, families, and staff of Edmonton Catholic Schools.

Please enjoy this **beautiful video story** of her passion for bringing us all into a deeper experience of the love of Jesus as we learn together, work together and pray together in answering the call to a faith-filled life of service.

“Well done, my good and faithful servant...Come share your master’s joy.”

Matthew 25:21

Choose life



Submitted by: Dean Sarnecki
ACSTA Executive Director

“This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.” (Deuteronomy 7:19)

Each year at the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA) annual general meeting the executive director is asked to give a report on the events and accomplishments of the association over the last year. When I first started the job the report was pretty straightforward, I listed dates, and events without commentary. However as each year passed the report became more and more reflective and more a call to action.

Many people appreciated these calls to action and commended me, but some, not so much. The critics said this wasn't my job with advocacy, and the accompanying calls to action, should be coming from the trustees and boards. However many, including my mentor, Tony Sykora, said that these

blunt assessments and rallying calls were essential; it's necessary for all of us to be on guard and alert for Catholic education. As a right and privilege, it is constantly at risk and we need to remind our trustees this as they are the primary advocates for and protectors of Catholic education in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon.

When I was hired at ACSTA the hiring committee, and Board, clearly gave me two important tasks. The first was to make the ACSTA a household name by promoting and advocating for Catholic Education and ensuring the mission and work of ACSTA was known to stakeholders in Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Yukon. The second task was to make strong connections with the office of the Minister of Education,

the Ministry, and various stakeholders involved in education throughout the province and territories. I have had the great pleasure of working with Bishops, the ATA, ASBA, and an alphabet soup of organizations that share similar goals building strong relationships among educational communities and for the greater benefit of both our students and Catholic Education in general.

I have focused my energies in this position on completing the tasks assigned to me when hired as a promoter of Catholic education. Over the eight years I served as executive director of the ACSTA the education and political landscape has changed considerably. Working with politicians has been especially rewarding. No matter who was Minister of Education, they all treated me, and ACSTA, with respect and dignity, listening attentively to the issues and concerns of the ACSTA despite often having ideologically different perspectives. I truly believe they all held the children in their care, and education itself, in the highest regard. I would also like to thank the chief of staff of each minister, too many to name individually, but all of them, just like their ministers, believed that the work they were doing was vitally important and respected the rights and dignity of every student. The same for the Ministry of Education staff who were excellent to work with and very cooperative in all endeavors.

I've worked with literally hundreds of Trustees across Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Yukon. I have made lifelong friends among this group and respect the work they do as educational, governance, and advocacy leaders for Catholic education. I believe the representation Catholic ratepayers are in good hands with our Catholic school trustees. I wish to thank all the trustees, those who have served on the Board of Directors, and those I only see at our annual general meeting each November. I enjoyed our meetings, I loved our faith development opportunities, and I looked forward to our annual general meeting to reconnect and revitalize friendships while discussing issues of vital importance to Catholic education. Thank you all for what you have done and that you continue to do and I look forward to working with you further in the future.

Thanks to all the school divisions, the superintendents, staff, and of course Catholic teachers who make Catholic education possible. It is the teachers' encounter with the students, on a day-to-day basis, that witnesses the love and mercy of Jesus Christ that distinguishes us from other schools. This spiritual relationship between teacher and student, the parents, and the church community makes Catholic education possible. I've had the opportunity to teach many teachers and I'm always overwhelmed by their faith and commitment to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ on a daily basis. I continue to

pray for them and all those involved in the sacred work of Catholic education.

Special thanks to my presidents and vice presidents, Tony, Adriana, and Serena, and Serafino, John, Paul, and Cheryl. Each of them has taught me about relationships, governance, education and faith over the past eight years, lessons I will never forget. Many others have accompanied me on this journey - Kevin, Anna, Cristina, Bob, Jamie, Albert, Louis, Tom, Amir, Mike(s) - I have to stop because there are too many to name and I am sure I have already missed someone important!

I'd like to specifically address two important groups of people in my life. The first is my work family, Michelle, Lorraine, and Eugenia, who have been daily inspirations, friends, and colleagues in the work of ACSTA. From my first day on the job, Michelle and Lorraine have constantly supported me through acts of kindness, friendship, love, and most importantly daily prayer. Eugenia joined us two years ago and fitted beautifully into the team providing gifts and talents that have helped us raise the ACSTA to even higher levels of advocacy and professionalism. These people are my rock and foundation (Matthew 7:24-27) at work and I can never thank them enough for all that they've done for me. The second group is my family, my wife Antonia, and my children Michael, Jennifer and her husband Mike, and

Emilie, who have provided me with joy and love beyond words. I desire to always do better for them and because of them. With the end of my work with ACSTA, I look forward to spending more time with them.

I had just turned 22 years old when I started teaching in the fall of 1982, at Jean Vanier Catholic School in Sherwood Park. I had taken the two religion classes at St. Joseph College that were recommended for teachers who wanted to teach in Catholic schools in Alberta. Beyond that I had little knowledge, experience, or academic training to teach Grade 7 religion. I remember picking up the binder, which held the religious education program for junior high, and having no idea where to start. The theme of the grade seven program was found in Deuteronomy 7 and the program was called "Choose Life". Thirty-eight years later that scripture passage has never left me. I have strived always in my life and career to choose life. I believe Catholic Education is a constant reminder in our lives and the lives of our students that God calls us to choose life and we are to share that message with our students. The verse ends with "choose life so that you and your children may live," a worthy goal for all of us. I ask and pray that in Alberta, NWT, and Yukon families teachers and students will continue forever to have the opportunity to choose life through Catholic Education.

Tribute

DEAN SARNECKI

Congratulations Dean!

I can still remember your warm welcome at the first ACSTA board meeting I attended in February 2015. Through the years, I appreciated your keen interest in CEAY, your prompt assistance whenever we had a need, your honest sharing of thoughts and ideas on Catholic education, and the relaxing times spent between board sessions.

CEAY relied on your professional guidance and valued the times you 'went the extra mile' seeking direction from legal council when it came to thorny issues in Yukon Catholic education. You also took the time to facilitate a retreat for our Catholic school staffs (2016) and to participate in our Strategic Plan Review (2018). Sr. Karen and I were honoured to receive you as a guest in our home. Over and above your firm commitment, you became a true friend.

Thank you!

We pray a blessing upon you, Dean, asking God to continue to channel your energy into the unique way you choose to promote Catholic education in the future!

With respect and deep gratitude,

Sr. Edith Elder

Dean,

What a gift you are to Catholic education, to the Church and to me personally. Thank you for trusting me over the years to join you in serving the Church in Alberta! Blessings on your next venture!

Roy Petitfils, LPC

I have personally known Dean for over twenty years as I taught his children. He was a colleague and became a friend. I also worked with him on the planning committees for SPICE and Blueprints for many years. He always wanted to bring in the best speakers for our teachers, administrators and trustees. He knew what was needed at the time.

Dean is a sincere, honest and humble servant leader. He is a faith filled man and has a heart of gold. He is loved by all and will be missed in this role. I have always been very impressed by his faith presentations he has given over the years and he has a special gift of presenting.

Dean has an abundance of knowledge in many areas and I know that in the next stage of his career that he will use the gifts and talents that God has given him to evangelize and promote Catholic Education which is near and dear to his heart. God will not let your expertise remain idle.

Many blessings to you and your family, Dean as you move into the next transition stage of your life.

Alene Mutala
Trustee, Edmonton CSSD

Thank you, Dean, for your many years of service to Catholic education in Alberta!

Becky Kallal



Dean has been a tremendous asset to Catholic education in Alberta. His commitment and passion for Catholic education has been evidenced through his dedicated service and support, and will leave a lasting mark. Through his wonderful relational skills Dean has impacted many lives in a positive and meaningful way. He has become a friend and someone I could reach out to for advice. He always made time for people and will be greatly missed. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors and pray God keeps you safe and well, surrounded by your loved ones, living out the dreams you have earned. All the best, my friend. God Bless.

Mike Paonessa, M.Ed.
Superintendent, Evergreen CSSD

Dean Sarnecki has been a guide and a friend. His understanding of how faith must form our actions and how our actions are an expression of our faith has been a constant in both happy and challenging times. His willingness to share and take time for each leader under the umbrella of the ACSTA strengthened our understanding of one another and ourselves. He listens with humility and took the time to build a strong community. We appreciate all your work Dean, congratulations on a well deserved retirement.

Thank you,

Nigel McCarthy
Lloydminster Catholic School Division

Faithful Servant

Dean, on behalf of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, many thanks to you for your years of dedicated service to the ACSTA. Your passion for Catholic Education is something that stands out in my mind – for you, this was not a day job but a true ministry, for which you poured out your heart and soul. And an extra special thanks for your support for the Ukrainian Bilingual Program and for all things Eastern Christian. Blessings to your and your family as you begin a new chapter in your earthly pilgrimage to the Heavenly Jerusalem!

God bless
Bishop David



It has been a privilege to get to know Dean these last few years as we continue to work with the ACSTA to defend and promote Catholic education.

Dean is a man of deep faith with great judgment and he has worked tirelessly to unify Catholic educators across the province to preserve and enhance Catholic education.

I want to wish Dean well as he enters the next phase of his life and hope that he will have time to work on his extraordinarily average golf game!

Fausto Franceschi - Dentons

Greetings Dean,

I want to express my appreciation for your many years of faithful and generous support for Catholic education in Alberta, and beyond – including Saskatchewan and the NWT. As a bishop I very much appreciated your support and presence at events and occasions in service of celebrating and furthering Catholic education. I also appreciated your advice and ‘mentoring’.

May the Lord bless you abundantly during the next stage of your life. Please know that your contributions have made Catholic Education stronger in Alberta and western Canada, and thus you have contributed to a strong legacy to build on.

In Christ,
+Mark
Bishop Mark A. Hagemoen - Diocese of Saskatoon

Dear Dean:

Under your leadership, the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association has been an advocate for Catholic education not only in the province of Alberta but across the country. You and your association have been a responsive partner organization for the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association and truly all trustee associations in Canada.

Throughout the years it has been our pleasure to collaborate with you on issues affecting or having the ability to affect Catholic education locally or nationally. While our respective locations are thousands of miles apart, you have never been more than a phone call away and that sort of access has built and strengthened the relationship between our organizations for the betterment of Catholic education.

Your friendship and collegiality have meant a great deal to me. We wish you all the best on your retirement and may God bless you on the journey ahead.

Nick Milanetti - OCSTA

Dear Dean,

Greetings from Sydney, Australia. It's not often that we meet people and feel as though we have been friends for years. But that happened for me when I met you. Whether we have caught up in Canada or the USA, meeting and working with you has always been an honour and a joy. I am inspired by so many things in your leadership: your passion for Catholic Education; care of our students, staff and parents; integrity in your negotiations; your upfront and direct style; and being such good company. I hope our paths cross a lot more in the years to come. This is not goodbye, but see you later, and with these lines comes my gratitude and admiration for all you have achieved, so much of it unseen and unrecognized - except by God, who is the best audience of all. Venture down under whenever you can when you can.

Blessings,
Richard Leonard SJ

Dean, thank you for your support, your advice, your help, your kindness, your caring, your guidance, your sense of humour, and of course your faith. As a trustee, President of SCSBA, and President of CCSTA, you have always been a text or phone call away. While Lloydminster has traditionally been the “silent partner” at ACSTA, you have always been available to us. It has been a pleasure working with you and I am grateful for your leadership and passion for Catholic Education. I wish you all the best. May God bless you always.

Paula Scott, LCSD Chair

A dear colleague and friend, Dean thank you for being foundational in the success of Catholic Education in the province of Alberta through both times of challenge and times of opportunity. Your amazing ability to connect and build relationships has served our educational community well at all levels of government and with those who are front line with our children. The impact of your leadership in both faith and education will be missed. We can only hope and pray that your wisdom and expertise will continue to be part of our Catholic community for years to come in whatever way you choose to continue serving. God Bless.

Michael Hauptman

It has been a great pleasure to get to know this very Catholic man. He has always acted with Christ in mind first. Dean will be missed and leaves big shoes to fill. Thank you for all you have done for Catholic Education and will continue to do. It has been great getting to know you. May the Lord bless you and keep you well.

Vince MacDonald, LCSSD

Thank you Dean for all your guidance and support. It was always a pleasure to speak with you. Enjoy your retirement and the extra time spent with your loved ones! Have faith that whatever lies ahead, God is already there.
Brigitte Kropielnicki
Directrice générale/Superintendent of Schools, CSNO

Dean,

Ministry allows me to meet many people who are passionate. I have been blessed to see your passion professionally and personally. You are loyal and fierce in working for Catholic education. You are dedicated to your craft, to further learning, to working with ecclesial and governmental structures. You model servant leadership in the way you provide a listening ear, tireless hours of advocacy, generous (Canadian) hospitality, and Christ-like friendship. You never take yourself too seriously but you have taken very seriously the responsibility to support Catholic education in Alberta. I am so grateful for the opportunities to serve alongside you, as well as to get the blessing of your humor, kindness, hospitality, and most importantly, your friendship. Well done, good and faithful servant.

Peace
Mike Patin, Catholic Speaker

Dean's dedication to Catholic education was evident in his work, and we always appreciated respectful, collaborative dialogues. His warmth and cheer will be missed, as he moves on to new adventures. All the best!

The Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) Board of Directors and Staff

May God
Bless You!

Relationship Builder



Although I was not on ACSTA while you were CEO Dean, I always enjoyed your warm, friendly smile when we had occasion to meet. I admire your positive, humorous manner and appreciate the context you gave at AGM to enhance our knowledge.

May God bless you with much health to enjoy the next chapter of your life.

With warm regards,
Joan Crockett

Dean:

Thank you for the many ways in which you have been our dear friend; attending at the Supreme Court of Canada on matters of Catholic Education, sharing CCSTA and ACSTA conventions, golfing at midnight in Yellowknife, and sharing a passion for teaching. You have been an amazing evangelist of Catholic Education and a champion of our Catholic faith. We look forward to sharing your next great adventure with you!

Blessings,
Mona-Lee and Kevin Feehan

Dear Dean:

During my tenure as President of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association, it has been a pleasure working with you in this vocation we share as advocates for Catholic education. Your commitment to developing strong relationships with the government, key stakeholders, and Catholic education partners provincially and nationwide, has helped to ensure that the trustees and staff of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association are well prepared and positioned to successfully further the Association's agenda.

As you embark on your retirement you leave behind a strong legacy and deep appreciation for your service, leadership and dedication to the ACSTA and Catholic education.

Dean, on behalf of OCSTA, I wish you happiness and fulfilment in the days ahead, and God's blessings for you and your family always.

Beverley Eckensweiler, President - Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association

Dear Dean,

The St. Joseph's College community is grateful for the leadership you have provided for Catholic education as the Executive Director of ACSTA.

During your undergraduate studies, you found a spiritual home at St. Joseph's College. Later in your career, we were excited to have you back to share your expertise teaching undergraduate courses in Catholic Education at St. Joseph's College. The community fully supports and looks forward to the successful completion of your doctorate next door to us at the Faculty of Education

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying , then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then served; if it is teaching, then teach.... "(Romans 12: 6-7)

May God bless you abundantly as you continue to contribute your gifts building up the Body of Christ in Alberta, teaching, serving, prophesying.

SJC

Lifelong Learner



Dear Dean,

You have been an excellent model of what it means to be a Catholic educator. I have had the privilege of knowing you for thirty years, first as a student in Elk Island Catholic Schools, and most recently in your service as Executive Director with ACSTA. Your contributions to the overall foundation of Catholic Education in Alberta have impacted countless people. Your advocacy for Catholic Education and your own witness of faith has shown the strength of your own passion and leadership. As you enter the next chapter of your life, may you continue to use your passion and gifts to bring people to encounter the Lord.

Sincerely,

Fr. Paul Kavanagh

It has been both an honor and a privilege to work with Dean in my previous role as ACSTA president. Dean's extensive knowledge, experience and passion for Catholic education is second to none. I extend my gratitude for his contribution to the children, families, staff and faith community that he has served so diligently over many years and I wish him all the very best in his retirement.

Blessings Dean!

Adriana LaGrange

St. Paul Education has appreciated working with Dean Sarnecki, Executive Director of ACSTA. Over the past years Dean has shown the ability to communicate well with provincial education leaders and the board in his role. His ability to convey the message and concerns of Catholic Education have not gone unnoticed. We will miss his insights and humor at the board table and wish him all the best and God's Blessings in his future endeavors.

St. Paul School Division

Dear Dean,

On behalf of Fort McMurray Catholic Schools, we would like to thank you for your passion and dedication to Catholic education in Alberta throughout the years. You have held a steady hand through some turbulent times, and your knowledge and patience has helped many new trustees, all while your humour reminds us to always look at the lighter side of life! Wherever your travels take you, we pray that you enjoy all of life's joy with Jesus at your side!

God bless,

Cathie Langmead, Board Chair

Fort McMurray Catholic School Division

Authentic Witness of Faith



Cher Dean,

Au nom des quatres conseils scolaires francophones en Alberta, nous souhaitons te remercier sincèrement pour ta grande contribution à l'éducation catholique en Alberta.

Ta sagesse, ton savoir, ta maîtrise des dossiers et ta compassion font de toi une personne forte, avec qui il est toujours bon d'échanger et de discuter. Plus particulièrement, ta compréhension des enjeux et des atouts de l'éducation francophone catholique, tant au niveau de l'Alberta que du pays, ont permis une plus grande ouverture et une meilleure compréhension des enjeux communs qui nous rassemblent.

Dean, nous souhaitons que la retraite t'apporte des moments remplis de bonheur et de partage ainsi que du temps précieux en famille.

Que la grâce du Seigneur brille sur toi et tes proches,

Sincèrement,

Natalie Beland, Conseil scolaire Centre-Est

Steve Daigle, Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord

Madeleine Fortin-Bergeron, Conseil scolaire Nord-Ouest

Geneviève Poulin, Conseil scolaire FrancoSud

Dean...Extended to you is a generous 'thank you' offered in heartfelt appreciation for all you have done for Catholic Education in Alberta. You have been a faithful steward and servant of the Mission and we are better because of your work. I have always been inspired by your conviction that the identity of our Catholic schools ought to be boldly rooted in Christ and prepare students for the wondrous and fulsome life proclaimed in his gospel. I am grateful for all of your contributions and, what's more, consider myself fortunate to be called your friend.

Grace & Blessings,
Troy Davies, CEO
Catholic Social Services



The Living Waters Catholic Separate School Division Board of Trustees and the Central Office Leadership Team would like to extend their congratulations to Dean Sarnecki on his retirement. They would also like to express their deepest gratitude to the leadership and support received from Dean Sarnecki in his role as ACSTA Executive Director. He has been a strong advocate for Catholic Education and has empowered many to share the narrative of Catholic Education in Alberta. In his leadership role, he has facilitated learning opportunities that have allowed our trustees to grow in their role as Catholic Trustees. Dean recognizes that Catholic education is a gift and shares the good news with purpose. He has modeled the importance of being an active and vocal supporter of Catholic education. As a faithful and humble servant, Dean has shared his passion for Catholic Education, inspiring us all to model the way forward. Congratulations Dean, and best wishes on your future endeavours!

Living Waters CSSD

God Be With You!

Dean, thank you for your servant-leadership in Catholic education. You served our Catholic community of educators and students with great fortitude and grace. It has been a pleasure and an honour to have worked with you. You have given us a legacy as servants of our Lord---and that is to serve others with the utmost humility. Thank you! May God bless you and your family abundantly.

Pax Christi,
Albert Felicitas

Thank you for all you have done and will continue to do. Thank you for the courage you have demonstrated in supporting and defending Catholic Education. God bless you now and in the years to come.

Fr. Jozef Wroblewski



Catholic Educational Leader, Mentor, Colleague, and Friend. Dean, your dedication to our Catholic schools and to Newman Theological College in particular, has been outstanding. Serving as a resource person with regards to Religious Studies curricular questions, teaching at Newman

Theological College as part of the Excellence in Catholic Educational Leadership (EXCEL) program, and initiating the Certificate in Catholic School Trusteeship are only a few ways that you have demonstrated your genuine commitment to Catholic education and to the formation of our current and future Catholic educational leaders. You have been a tremendous mentor and friend. You will be missed. Well done, good and faithful servant. May God continue to bless you and your good works now and forever.

Sandra Talarico

Best wishes on the road ahead.
Thank you for carrying the
torch for Catholic Education in
Alberta.

God bless,
Marilyn Welsch

Dean, thanks for fanning the flame for GrACE . Your commitment and insights allowed us to take the ember of an idea to a full-scale provincial movement. Your impact on Catholic Education is immeasurable. May God be with you.

Bonnie Annicchiarico
Director | GrACE

Dear Dean,

It has been a pleasure to meet you and work with you. Everytime we had the opportunity to meet you went out of your way to come say hi and chat. Thank you for your smile and your hospitality. MERCI! Your time and work at ACSTA has been greatly appreciated! I wish you happiness and success in your future endeavors!

Que Dieu te bénisse!
Sylvianne Maisonneuve
Présidente
Conseil Scolaire du Nord-Ouest



Dean was an exceptional support for Catholic trustees but he also played an essential role at building effective relationships with Catholic superintendents. Over the years, Dean's wisdom and sense of humour helped me navigate many complex issues. I always appreciated how Dean recognized individuals or boards and would give shout outs. He knew who we were and he saw us there.

In his written work, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis speaks about the importance of Catholic education, "Catholic schools, which always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelization of culture." In his work, Dean demonstrated what this looks like. He lived the culture where we must encounter and really know people to evangelize.

Congratulations Dean. Enjoy retirement! Thanks you for always being a second set of footprints in the sand.

Cindi Vaselenak

Advocate For Catholic Education

On behalf of the Alberta School Boards Association, I would like to extend our gratitude to Dean for his eight years of dedicated service to Catholic trustees in Alberta. Dean's work has had an everlasting impact on school boards and students across our province. The legacy Dean has established is one of dedicated advocacy and relentless commitment to education in Alberta. We appreciate his extraordinary support for our Catholic school board trustees, and wish him nothing but the best for his next chapter.

Best,
Dr. Vivian Abboud, Chief Executive Officer, ASBA

Dean, thank you for your support of Catholic Education in Alberta. From your career in the classroom, teaching at Newman, (you instructed one of my GDRE classes), to serving as the ED, you have shown your support and admiration for Catholic Education in everything you do. Thank you for your dedication to preserving and advancing Catholic Education in Alberta.

Robert Yaro
Director for Fort McMurray RCSSD

Dean Sarnecki is a great friend and supporter of Catholic Education, especially in the Yukon. He really knows and cares about our Catholic school students, staff, and trustees here in the North. We are blessed to work with him!

He has great knowledge on our unique Catholic School system up here and offers frank advice on how to work through it.

Personally, I've found Dean is wonderful to work with, especially since we share a similar sense of humour. I count on Dean to brighten up the (sometimes) long business meetings with colourful phrases and poking fun at himself. Thank you from all of us in Yukon Catholic Education and blessings in your next steps Dean!

John Williams, Catholic Education Association of Yukon



Dean – a poetic ramble

The teacher, a student?
Before blurbed as 'life-long learning'
On another faded staff-room poster
It is elemental fire.

'eager passion' – it is Latin and laconic – Student
So your soul, my friend – never laconic you ... ever eager
Flame for setting Spirit-Fires
In green wood minds and hard wood hearts
Thanks for singeing me.

Rev. Stefano Penna



Sense of Humour



Dear ACSTA members,

I am grateful for this opportunity to say a few words of thanks to Dean Sarnecki as he retires from his position as ACSTA Executive Director.

As you are aware, we have three Catholic schools in our Diocese which are located in Whitehorse. As with Alberta Catholic schools, we are faced with many challenges on a variety of levels, but as a Diocese, we have limited resources to address them. Over the past four and a half years, since I've been Bishop of Whitehorse, I have communicated several times with Dean regarding Catholic education issues and he has been very generous in sharing his knowledge and expertise in this area.

Two years ago, when Dean came to Whitehorse to deliver a professional development day for Catholic teachers, I had the pleasure of meeting him in person. His passion and dedication towards authentic Catholic education, rooted deeply in his Catholic Faith and love of Christ, was very evident to me.

I am sure all of you who have worked with Dean in Alberta will miss his friendly and enthusiastic presence in the work environment. I can assure you that we will also miss him, and we will not forget all he has done for our Catholic schools and community here in Yukon.

Many thanks, Dean, and may God bless you and your family as you move on to new endeavours. I remain,

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Hector Vila
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WHITEHORSE

Dean Sarnecki is a leader in Catholic education. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and many friends in Elk Island Catholic Schools we want to congratulate him on his years of service as Executive Director of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association. We accept his retirement from ACSTA with mixed feelings because we will miss his leadership but we know he probably has another adventure in mind. He has a special place in our hearts here in Elk Island Catholic Schools because of his long service here as well, as a teacher, chaplain and administrator. His unwavering support of Catholic education is one thing, his sense of humour another. His years spent working with students, colleagues and trustees have developed into a legacy. We hope he is as proud of his accomplishments, as we are of him. We wish him the best in his future endeavours. May God bless him and his family.

Ted Paszek, Board Chair
Elk Island Catholic Schools

The Best!

Dean was the first person I met when I became an ACSTA Director. I have never known ACSTA without Dean, and he apparently, has never known ACSTA without me! He has always been present to help and guide our board, and Yellowknife Catholic Schools will be forever grateful. Dean is the epitome of dedication to Catholic education, and has demonstrated an abundance of patience and grace. Dean always took time to warmly welcome each person he met; and made everyone feel important, valued, appreciated and loved. He is a great friend to many - but we know we are his favourites! God bless you, and keep you, and make his face to shine upon you! You will be greatly missed, Dean

Erin Currie
Yellowknife Catholic Schools

"With upright heart, he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand."

Psalm 78:72

Dean,

Eight years ago, you were charged with the tremendous responsibility of celebrating, preserving, promoting and enhancing Catholic Education. It is a fast-moving train with a constantly changing landscape that welcomes new Bishops, new Ministers and new Trustees. One thing remained consistent: your light-hearted welcoming spirit, filled with a faithful heart and a jovial sense of humor. Your vision made you a great leader, but your integrity, respect and compassion make you a great person. We hope your retirement is a time to look back with admiration for all that you have accomplished, and a time to look forward with anticipation. May the blessings of the Lord be upon you as you embrace the newest journey of your life. We thank you for your commitment to the precious gift of Catholic Education. Congratulations on your retirement. Warmest wishes from,

The Calgary Catholic Board of Trustees

Light Hearted, Welcoming Spirit



On behalf of the Alberta Bishops we wish to recognize your commitment to Catholic Education in Alberta through your role as the Executive Director of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association. You supported not only the trustees but the bishops when Catholic Education was under threat and facing challenges. History and political perspective can be of value in such times, however living and witnessing to one's faith sustains us and gives the necessary courage. Thank you for your dedication and the work that you have done to promote Catholic education in Alberta.

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories



We would like to congratulate Dean on his retirement, and best in his future endeavours.

From the Staff and Trustees of East Central Alberta CSSD

Dear Dean,

Thank you so much for all you have done supporting Catholic Education in Alberta. On a personal note you've been an important mentor to me in understanding educational issues. All the best to you in the years ahead my friend.

In Christ,
Jason West

Dean as you enter this next chapter in life please know that you will be greatly missed! Your dedication and personal commitment to bettering the present and future of Catholic Education and Catholic School Boards in Alberta as our director was well noticed. We will have a hard time finding a replacement with the same passion and commitment to excellence. On behalf of the board of Trustees, staff and students of HFCRD please go forward knowing we thank you for all you have done and wish you the best in your new adventure. God Bless!

Kelly Whalen
Holy Family CSSD

Dear Dean,

On behalf of the Board and Administration of Edmonton Catholic Schools, we would like to congratulate you on your retirement and thank you for your many years of service to and advocacy for Catholic education in Alberta.

You leave a legacy of bearing witness to the richness and strength of Catholic education. Your commitment to forming teachers, administrators, and trustees so that they, too, can be strong witnesses and advocates for this gift has helped shape the nature of our Catholic system in Alberta.

We have deeply appreciated your accessibility and you have been a joy to work with. The mentorship and wisdom that you have provided through your strong faith has been of immense support to us. You have been stellar in your role with the ACSTA, and we are proud to call you "friend".

Thank you for your excellent service to Catholic education in the province of Alberta as you live out your vocation!

Many Blessings,

Edmonton Catholic Board of Trustees and Administration

Committed to Faith Formation

On behalf of everyone at CCSTA, congratulations on your up coming retirement. It's been a pleasure working with you and more importantly getting to know you as a person. Your expertise and guidance will be missed. All the best.

Julian Hanlon, Executive Director Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association

Dean, congratulations on your re-wire-ment! Thank you for all that you have done to promote, preserve, enhance and celebrate Catholic Education in our province. Your leadership, Catholic knowledge and sense of humour, will be missed at the ACSTA table. Having known you for many years, and seeing how you so believe in Catholic Education, your continued advocacy and support for this gift of Catholic education will not cease. You'll find a new path and you will succeed. Take time to relax, rejuvenate and relish in the fact that you have been a "good and faithful servant" for Catholic Education. Thank you and God bless you.

Michelle Szott, Trustee and ACSTA Board Director Elk Island Catholic Schools

On behalf of the Elk Island Catholic Schools (EICS), we want to extend our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to Dean Sarnecki as he retires as Executive Director of the Alberta Catholic Schools Trustees' Association. Dean has been a cherished EICS colleague for many years and has shared his joy of Catholic education both inside the classroom and at the governance level. It has been a pleasure working with Dean and all members of the EICS Board of Trustees wish him all the best and many blessings in his retirement and future endeavors.

Elk Island Catholic Schools



Congratulations!

Dean, it has been a pleasure and an honour to work with someone as passionate and dedicated to Catholic education as you are. In our short tenure together, I have greatly enjoyed discussing the finer points of legal arguments and case law on separate school rights. I will miss your enthusiasm, attention to detail, and your zany sense of humour! All the best and God bless.

Simon Elzen-Hoskyn - Dentons

At STAR we'll like to say thank you to Mr. Sarnecki for his years of advocacy, service and leadership to ACSTA.

We at STAR will summarize Mr. Sarnecki, as a vault of Catholic Education knowledge based on his advocacy, support and guidance to Catholic Education in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Yukon; and beyond.

Mr. Sarnecki, may the road rise to meet you, God be with you and yours, sail into the sunset and enjoy.

Henry T. Effon,
Board Vice-Chair - STAR Catholic Schools

Dean

As the ACSTA Executive Director, you have not just seen some 'ups & downs' but experienced some/many. It has been quite a ride, but in my view you represented ACSTA well as a 'role model' for Catholic Education. During your tenure, you continued the positive relationships with the Alberta, Northwest Territories & Yukon Bishops and forged new connections with the various Ministers & Deputy Ministers of Education that will carry the Association forward. You kept us abreast of the issues regarding Catholic Education, not only in Alberta and the Territories, but across Canada and we were inspired by the keynote speakers you selected for the ACSTA Conferences and Members Boards. For 'the times' you were the right person for the position. You did a heck of a good job. Your jovial approach was appreciated and will be missed. The bar keeps getting 'higher' for those who follow.

Wishing you the best in your future endeavors, but don't forget to enjoy the 'retirement life', may it be a long one. Enjoy all the Blessings that come/go with 'Retirement'.

Enjoy, Take Care and May God's Blessings be with you and your Family.

--
Jean R. Boisvert



One of the many things I enjoyed as a Director and Vice President of ACSTA was working alongside Tony and Dean. Dean's personality was well suited to his role; it came naturally. His compassion generosity and care for others was genuine and was reciprocal with all Catholic Trustees in the Province. He will be missed. Dean was instrumental in establishing and continuing the great relationships we pride ourselves on as an organization. Our loss will be Antonia's gain so that they may share more adventures together. Happy Retirement. The Catholic Community is stronger because of your work and enthusiasm. Take care my friend,

Serafino Scarpino, former CCSD Trustee,
Former ACSTA VP and Director

Dean, it has been an absolute privilege to work with you over the past few years. I have found your knowledge of Catholic education (and all the legal nuances), together with your passion and dedication, to be truly impressive and inspiring. You have done wonderful things during your time at ACSTA and I know you will continue to do wonderful things as your journey continues. Hopefully I can continue to be a part of that journey in some way! Take care and best of luck.

Cristina Wendel, Partner - Dentons

It was always a pleasure to work with Dean! He is inquisitive and loves learning about the law. I will sure miss our debates but I know we will continue to share a friendship and bond (especially over true crime podcasts, which we are both addicted to!). I know he will move on to do great things. God bless.

Anna Loparco



Dean has had a tremendous influence on the faith life of students. This was witnessed first-hand as Dean and I established the Good Friday celebration of the cross led by students from Archbishop Jordan High School while he was a Chaplain with Elk Island Catholic Schools. Thank you Dean for all that you have done for Catholic education in your many roles, but most importantly the work you did to prepare your students to lead faith filled lives of service. May God Bless and keep you.

Fr. Don Stein

Golf Enthusiast



On behalf of all the trustees from the Grande Prairie and District Catholic School Board we would like to congratulate Dean on his retirement and wish him all the best in the future.

God-Bless
Michael Ouellette

Many thanks, Dean, for your years of service to the mission of Catholic Education. I have witnessed in you a person whose love for the gift of Catholic education is deep and whose commitment to its preservation and flourishing is strong. It has been a privilege to collaborate with you in this ministry, which is vital to the life of the Church. May God bless you richly in your retirement.

+ Richard Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton

Standing up for Catholic education can be risky business. Not everybody understands the Church's commitment to education, Catholics included. The person who stands up and stands out becomes a lightning rod for rhetoric that can be at times, well, nasty. I have seen Dean fill that position on a few occasions over the years. There was no doubt about Dean's personal convictions on the matter of Catholic education, and he would readily stand up and take the heat. Facing the media demands a healthy dose of tact and tenacity. I appreciated his honest and transparent communication, his respectful tone in all conversations, his availability to be where the action is and speak for us all. I am deeply grateful, and wish Dean blessings for a future of hope and satisfaction.

+ Gerard

Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan

Dear Dean,

Holy Spirit Catholic School Division would like to thank you for years of service to ACSTA and specifically to the many years of advocacy for Catholic Education in Alberta. Your work in this area is so greatly appreciated.

As you pursue a different area of focus moving forward, know that your work has impacted many individuals across the province. Thank you for your leadership in Catholic Education. We wish you much success and happiness as you explore a new path. very best to you,

Kind regards,
Ken Sampson,
Superintendent,
Holy Spirit RCSSD

Inspirational Leader

As I reflect on Dean's career, I think of him as an accomplished:

Man of Faith who practices his faith loudly and proudly.

Faith Teacher & Scholar who is a life-long researcher & learner, K-12 Religious Education expert and adult presenter.

Advocate who constantly monitors & posts Catholic education content on social media.

Strategist who consults with the AB Bishops, Education Minister's Office, media, and legal experts.

Networker with stakeholders i.e. AB Bishops, AB Education, ASBA, CCSSA, CCSTA, ATA, PSBAA and Catholic colleagues from other provinces and territories.

Servant Leader who leads by his commitment, hard work, by example and always being on call.

Friend & Golfer – Full of ideas and always ready for a laugh and a glass of 'red'.

God's blessings to you 'Good and Faithful Servant'...Jamie McNamara

"He shepherded them with integrity of heart and guided them with his skillful hand".

Psalm 78:72

Thank you!

As the former Alberta Laison Bishop to ACSTA, I had the privilege of working with Dean for a number of years. He brought to his responsibility as Executive Director of ACSTA a passionate, professional and apostolic spirit.

It is difficult to describe the contribution of Dean without seeming to employ hyperbole - he distinguished himself as a churchman, co-worker with the bishops, educator, politician, goal setter, policy maker, planner, communicator, information receiver and disseminator, administrator, advocate and role model. He knew when to lead and when to follow. As a good leader he surrounded himself with good people who were encouraged and empowered by him.

Looking ahead, based on several non-meeting meetings on the golf course, I can say quite confidently that he will never make it on the Champions Tour. When he's good, he's good, but when he's off he becomes either a farmer checking

- the crops, or a
- deep sea-diver,
- or a woodsman!
- Nevertheless, I
- sincerely hope
- that we have many
- more adventures
- together. Peace,
- Bishop Henry



WE WILL MISS YOU!