



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

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

8421 - 101 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6A 0L1 | T 780.469.1010 F 780.465.3003

Reflecting on the Ministry of Catholic School Trustee

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we prepare for our upcoming municipal elections, the Bishops of Alberta would like to offer a reflection on the importance of Catholic education and the ministry of a Catholic school trustee. Our intention in doing so is to encourage your participation in the electoral process and to offer considerations to guide your discernment of the appropriate candidate. In Alberta, Catholics have the right to a publicly funded Catholic education. From this right arises the responsibility of the Catholic community to seek out and choose from among its members those with the gifts required to strengthen and protect our Catholic schools through the ministry of trustee.

Christian leadership assumes various roles in our community. One such role is that of the Catholic school trustee. As the name indicates, the trustee is one to whom has been entrusted by the Church and the electorate the serious responsibility of governance. In the context of the Alberta educational system, the trustees who protect and govern our schools are in a unique position. “Catholic Separate” schools have two classes of rights, duties and responsibilities. There are those conferred by civil legislation (the provincial School Act) and shared with all other schools and those conferred by Canon Law (the universal law of the Church) upon the Catholic school. These two lines of accountability require of trustees that they be not only stewards with exceptional governance skills but also people of faith and commitment to the Church and her mission.

In a Catholic school, all curricular and extra-curricular activity is to be rooted in and consistent with the principles of Catholic doctrine. A Catholic school is a unique and distinctive faith community of learning that not only pursues academic excellence but also nurtures the entire person. It is an instrument of the Church’s evangelization, apostolate and pastoral action.

Catholic school trustees are a vital link between the school, the church, the community and the government, and they provide an essentially Catholic oversight of the school division or district. This vocation of stewardship is a call from the Church and the community to unite faith and political life in the service of handing on the Catholic faith to our children. In practice this means a careful attentiveness to the wishes of the constituents and the mandates of Alberta Education in decisions that will always accord with the truth of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church.

From this responsibility it is clear that the Catholic school trustee must possess attributes consistent with faith in Christ. Trustees are first and foremost disciples of our Lord. Their love of Jesus will be reflected in full participation in the life of the Church and engagement in the community. Fidelity to the Church, its teaching and its leaders enables the board of trustees and the local Church to think with one mind and work together in ministry to our students. The willingness and ability to share the faith with administration, teachers, students and the community is an essential feature of a Catholic school trustee. It requires the forging of trusting relationships with and among fellow trustees, staff, students, parents, clergy, and parishioners.

The Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World, #75), issued at the Second Vatican Council, explicitly outlines the duty and obligation of all Catholics to be active in the political process. This duty to make an informed, moral choice in the selection of representatives of the community who will guide and govern, protect and maintain our Catholic schools is a sacred obligation. We must select leaders who will ensure the continued formation of our school communities in the values and teachings of our Lord as taught through our Church. We encourage you to exercise this responsibility in a spirit of prayer and in accord with an informed conscience.

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton



Most Reverend Gregory J. Bittman
Auxiliary Bishop of Edmonton



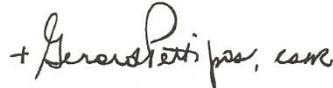
Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton



Most Reverend Paul Terrio
Bishop of St. Paul



Most Reverend Frederick Henry
Bishop of Calgary



Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR
Archbishop Grouard-McLennan



Most Reverend Murray Chatlain
Apostolic Administrator of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

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