



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

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

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Sharing the Good News about our Human Nature

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis is leading our Church into a process of two (2) consecutive Synods on the Family. Therefore in this synodal experience, our Church provides us with an opportunity to look at and deepen our appreciation for and commitment to Catholic education with its reliance on, but also its support for Catholic family life. Indeed, in Catholic educational circles, we often hear mention of the Family-Parish-School axis or tripod on which and around which the education of our young people happens.

The placing of the word 'Family' first in the 'tripod' is not accidental, because the initial education and faith witnessing for children is within the family. In 2006 our bishops issued a letter on this, entitled, "The Parent and the Catholic School". And certainly in our schools we find many children who arrive having already received a good start on the journey of faith, from their families. However, not only is this increasingly not the case, but also we find today many young people coming to our Catholic schools who do not have a Biblical understanding of human nature itself and who are, on such questions, completely dependent on the opinions of the 'popular culture'.

This latter fact is a major challenge for Catholic schools and education but at the same time, is this not a great opportunity and occasion for evangelization?

Catholicism and therefore Catholic education has a rich and beautiful "Good News" about our human nature in the light of our Risen Lord. Our Church's proclamation on our humanity and therefore the family finds its foundation in the life and preaching of Jesus, who lived and grew up in the family of Nazareth.

All of us involved in Catholic education, clergy, school trustees and administrators, teachers and students and, yes, parents, we all have an emerging challenge to face but also a great opportunity to share the “Good News” of Jesus Christ and his vision and plan for humanity and the family. Our Catechism of the Catholic Church states this well when it says, “No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith, as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others.”(CCC 166)

In preparing for the first of two Synods on the Family the Church reminds us that, “The love of God shines in a particular way in the Holy Family of Nazareth, the sure point of reference and comfort for every family.” Let us all in Catholic Education be guided by that ‘shining example’, and again be challenged but also strengthened in our common mission of “handing it on to others.”

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton



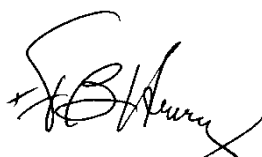
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