



GOD'S CALLING...

FORMING AND TRANSFORMING THROUGH CATHOLIC EDUCATION
in EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

OUR PURPOSE • OUR CATHOLIC IDENTITY • OUR FOUNDATION • OUR DISTINCTIVENESS

THE HEART AND
SOUL OF CATHOLIC
EDUCATION IS JESUS
CHRIST WHO
PROCLAIMS THE
GOOD NEWS THAT
GOD WILLS FOR US
THE FULLNESS OF LIFE.

CHRIST IS ALL

AND IN ALL!

(COLOSSIANS 3:11)

DEBBIE ENGEL *(Chair, Board of Trustees)*

What is Catholic education? The difference of a Catholic education begins with Jesus Christ who is the foundation for the life, curriculum and culture of Catholic schools. He inspires our staff to view each child as a precious gift and sacred responsibility. In turn, students are invited to develop the knowledge, beliefs, skills, values and attitudes needed to build a relationship with God and community through the person of Jesus Christ. Catholic education upholds the goals and objectives of the highest quality education while embracing the growth and development of the whole person – physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

JOAN CARR *(Superintendent)*

Edmonton Catholic Schools seeks to prepare our students to live fully as people of faith in the world of the 21st century. The very foundation of the mission of our Catholic schools is faith in God as revealed in Jesus Christ. This places Jesus at the heart of our endeavor; his presence is reflected in everything we do. We seek to help our students know about Jesus, but more significantly we desire that they come to know him. Formed by a loving encounter experienced in the people and life of our Catholic schools, our young people are nurtured in a relationship with the Lord, a friendship that will be transformative in their lives.

GUY LECLERC *(Teacher)*

My job is to make my students feel good about themselves and confident in what they can accomplish. My job is to be Christ's eyes, ears, hands and hearts for them.

KANDISE SALERNO *(Teacher)*

I am a person who gives hope, who gives love, who gives faith to all these kids and that is my job.

SUSAN MAKALE *(Principal)*

The mission of Catholic education is to bring students into a closer relationship with Christ as they journey towards discovering the fullness of their humanity. What makes us unique is that we use our faith to contextualize all of the understandings that we gain along this journey. Each day is filled with encounters with Jesus Christ as students acquire skills and knowledge and build relationships. They thus develop a sense of who they are in relation to all of Creation and their giftedness and strength as members of the Body of Christ.

GENEVIEVE KELEMEN *(Principal)*

The mission of Edmonton Catholic Schools is to enable our students, parents and staff to experience a community of faith and to help them build it into all areas of their life. This is the basis of Catholic education - to become community and take care of one another. We are companions on the journey as we discover and answer our call to follow Jesus Christ. As we grow together each member of this Body of Christ learns to use the gifts that God has given to us in service to one another. Through acceptance of all and sharing God's love, all members will be encouraged to reach their potential and enjoy life with God now and eternally.

CHRISTINA AND JASON KURZITZA *(Parents)*

Catholic education is a gift. We are blessed to have the opportunity for our children to deepen and enrich their faith as they broaden their understanding of the world. It is of vital importance and reassurance to us that once our children become students, the values and beliefs that we have embraced within our home continue to be demonstrated and reinforced by the teachers and staff within the Catholic school system. We are certainly grateful for the opportunity to send our children to such an environment within Edmonton Catholic Schools.

EUGENIA CHISOTTI *(Department Head - Religion)*

I believe Edmonton Catholic Schools is a dynamic Catholic faith community in the truest sense of the word. If we associate the word Catholic with universality as well as comprehensiveness, we can see this aspect of Catholic very much embedded in the religious passion that drives our District. Our community works tirelessly to enrich the multicultural mosaic of our student body and to realize the students' full potential: spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. We encourage students, and their families, to be active participants in building a more just and caring society in response to the Catholic baptismal call, while still respecting the religious and cultural diversity that is now very much a part of our school district. Additionally, we attempt to model Christ's light in society by respecting the values found within our Catholic teachings, our earth and ourselves.

LAURIE LADEROUTE *(Parent)*

Having my children enrolled anywhere else but in the ECSD was not a difficult decision. As a child, attending an Edmonton Catholic School, I felt that I was safe and that discipline and respect was demanded. The values that were taught to me in school were mirrored in my home. Now, having three of my own children in the District, I want them to first and foremost feel safe. I want them to know that respect and discipline is an everyday expectation. I want them to know and feel that Catholic values will ground them when they need a place to turn to.

DWAYNE SALLOUM *(AUPE President)*

Edmonton Catholic School's love in Christ is instilled upon our staff and filters down to the students. Participation in religious celebrations, church visits, prayers throughout the day are what makes Edmonton Catholic Schools unique. As a Christian Community our students develop a deeper faith in Christ that will strengthen them throughout their journey through life.

WILMA ELLENBURGH *(ECSSA President)*

Our role as Edmonton Catholic employees is to form beliefs, character, cultivate virtues, provide knowledge, insight and perspective to those we touch. Through our convictions we provide a view of the world through a lens of faith.

KATHY MACISAAC *(Executive Director)* and **SANDY GILLIS** *(President - Edmonton Catholic Teachers Local)*

Edmonton Catholic Teachers takes its mandate from Catholic social teaching as expressed in the words of Pope John Paul II in his letter *Laborem Exercens* wherein he proclaims the dignity of work for human beings. The Pope considers the importance of unions, which he calls 'an indispensable element of social life.' As a branch of our provincial Alberta Teachers' Association, the ECT Local takes seriously its role in advocating for the rights of teachers and always seeks to work in harmony with our employer to achieve the best possible working conditions for all. Our executive and council of school representatives are mindful of our vocation as Catholic teachers, believe in promoting the value of Catholic schools and base the daily workings of our Local on the teachings of social justice.

BRETT MACKEY *(Principal)*

The mission of Edmonton Catholic Schools is to bring Christ's message of unconditional love to its students within the context of delivering a 21st century education. In a society where the majority of children who are baptized never see the inside of a Church or receive any formal religious upbringing by their families, Edmonton Catholic schools can expose students to the teachings and culture of our faith. Edmonton Catholic schools can help foster a relationship between its students and Christ through daily prayer, religious celebration, the creation of a truly Catholic milieu and a curriculum itself that is permeated with the Catholic faith. It is far more than just Religion class, as teachers in Edmonton Catholic schools, unlike public schools, can freely discuss issues of faith in their classrooms any time of the day without reproach. Furthermore, our Catholic schools welcome students of all denominations, as God's message of love, is universal, unconditional and extends to all people.

TRUDY JAY-CONRAD *(Parent)*

Many children grow up today without the loving support of a family or community. Some will make poor choices and follow peers who are in similar situations and not realize there are resources out there to assist them in life. The Catholic education system not only focuses on the core subjects of math and science but the Core Values of: dignity and respect, honesty, loyalty, fairness, personal and communal growth. These values are instilled in the children who attend. The Catholic education system's Social Justice program encourages children to go outside of their comfort zone and help others in need and explore the realities faced by many people their own age and older. A child that can learn the importance of these by attending one of Edmonton's Catholic schools is a child who will succeed.

LEN NUNES *(Parent)*

A Catholic education for my child is more than just Religion class. A Catholic education for my child is about getting my child to explore the world of a "higher power" and then teach them the ways of God.

Again, this is more than just reading them stories from the Bible; it is about daily discussions and re-affirmations of the ways of Jesus Christ. Something as simple as the daily morning prayer, gives our children a second or two to reflect on all they really have in this world and teaches them that it is okay to "talk" to God.

SONJA WILLIER *(Assistant Principal)*

Faith...Hope...Grace...Love
---these are the pillars of Edmonton Catholic Schools.

Our children are precious gifts and God's love surrounds them as they walk through life and learning. Each day brings forward blessings as well as challenges. It is through their faith in God that our children learn they do not walk alone.

All the staff of Edmonton Catholic Schools are incredibly special people and their light and faith help our children find their way. As we work together in our school communities, we gather our hands and hearts to bring hope, humanity and 'grace' into the lives of our children.

Our children are our hope for the future. They are the gifts that God gives us. It is our responsibility to honor these gifts with our words, our actions and our lessons. This is what 'walking in grace' means.

Our hopes for our children are simple...that they are able to feel the love that surrounds them...giving them the courage to take steps towards a better day. Through inspiration, preparation and service our children will reach a better tomorrow.

ERIN CROCKER *(Parent)*

I have three children now attending Mother Teresa school and I feel constantly blessed. The staff at this school is magnificent and I am so happy that I found this school. I believe that being a Catholic school does make a difference. With Catholic education comes God as the central focus. I may not be Catholic, but I am a Christian and I see regularly the difference that having God at the centre of education makes in my children's lives. If a child makes a mistake in how they treat others they are loved back onto the right path not berated for behaving incorrectly. My children are learning to love and respect nature and to take care of it because it is God's creation. Here in Edmonton we are given the option of public Catholic education and I am delighted that my family is now a part of it.

FLORIANA BRUNI-BOSSIO *(Assistant Principal)*

We are a community of faithful that come together at our School Opening Mass sharing as one the teachings of the Gospel and the Body and Blood of Christ.

We continue our Spiritual Journey through the year and renew our faith during Faith Development Day. This renewed faith permeates in the school, classroom and in our students. The children learn the teachings of the Gospel and live the Gospel values.

As a school we participate in the sacramental and Eucharistic life of the Parish. All students attend mass as one family to understand and connect to the Gospel teachings and to strengthen their faith in God.

Regular visits to the school from the Parish Priests inspire students to learn more about the Gospel teachings and how God works through us to be more like Jesus. Reconciliation and forgiveness are encouraged daily in relationship building.

We are unique in that students of Catholic education have found their calling in religious life and continue the teachings of God's Church.

We are the hands of God working through Social Justice initiatives to serve the community.

We are a community working together to further God's plan of creation having a significant impact on lives of children and their families.

More than 34,000 students in Edmonton Catholic Schools are united in one faith community to serve God in one another.

BOB AND LISA WARDELL *(Parents)*

Why Catholic education is important to us

The Catholic school provides an environment wherein a child can openly express their love for God and Jesus without being laughed at by their peers.

Children are offered an environment where they can continually grow in their faith by being given the opportunity to learn and share how God plays a significant role in their lives.

God resides in a Catholic school. This means that a child can openly share his/her love for Jesus Christ and our Father without being laughed at or criticized by his/her peers. He/she is given an opportunity for continued spiritual growth and increased faith that he/she may not find within the home by sharing and learning with peers how God plays a significant role in his/her life in society and the greater community. Catholic education means another opportunity to participate in prayer outside of church and home. It allows children to come together to cooperate and practice in the true Christian spirit by focusing on the needs of all and not solely on themselves as individuals.

Catholic education means that being surrounded by the love of God, our children learn to love others and grow up to be young people who are compassionate of others, globally minded and firm in their faith.

MARIA SAUNDERS *(Parent)*

Catholic education is a strong foundation of "Christ-centred" values that teaches people the moral responsibilities to build a world with justice by always upholding the dignity of the human being.

HUGH MACDONALD *(Principal)*

It is important to have the opportunity to provide experiences, instruction and models that will provide our students, their families, our staff and all we touch the opportunity for a life of Grace here on earth and the possibility of everlasting life walking with our Christ, Jesus, in all we do.

Through these actions we are bringing our world and our peoples closer to Christ's prayer for us after His gift of Free Will.



God's Calling... Forming and Transforming through Catholic Education

Our Purpose

FORMING AND TRANSFORMING

Catholic education embraces faith and learning. Our Christian story provides foundational elements for a vision of Catholic education permeating the life and learning of our students.

Catholic education forms part of the saving mission of the church.

- Jesus proclaims the good news that God wills the fullness of life for all people.
- The Holy Spirit inspires Catholics to proclaim this good news in dialogue with the world.

To this end, the task of Catholic education is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life.

- The first part of this task is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught in light of the Gospel.
- The second part is realized in the growth of the virtues that characterize the Christian life.

WE EXPRESS OUR VISION THROUGH:

- Our Catholic Identity
- Our Foundation
- Our Distinctiveness

IN CARRYING OUT OUR MANDATE, CATHOLIC SCHOOLS CONTINUALLY FACE THESE QUESTIONS:

- What does it mean to be Catholic?
- What is Catholic education?
- What makes our schools Catholic?
- How do we live out our mission?



Our Catholic Identity

...WHO ARE WE?

Catholic schools operate within at least two contexts: faith and culture. As Catholics, we recognize that our experiences of faith and our daily living are meant to be in harmony.

OUR FAITH

Catholic faith rests on the conviction that we know God reveals to us, preeminently through the life and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the sacred and significant dimensions of life.

Furthermore, it also includes the conviction that we have received from Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, the mandate to announce the mystery of salvation to all and to renew all things in Christ.

OUR CATHOLIC VISION

Our Catholic faith leads to a distinctive Catholic vision. In this vision, Catholics see the world in a unique way, as created by God and sustained by God's love.

God's presence is made manifest in a world which reveals both blessed and broken, the reality of evil and the healing power of grace.

Through faith, Catholics see God's dynamic presence in all creation as the gift which brings everything to completion in the final reign of God, a reign of truth, of life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace.

Our Foundation

INSPIRED BY:

- Love of the Father
- Faith in Jesus Christ
- Hope from the Holy Spirit

WE BELIEVE IN GOD AND WE BELIEVE:

- that each person is created in the image and likeness of God
- that each child is a precious gift and sacred responsibility
- in the goodness, dignity and worth of each person
- that Christ is our model and our teacher
- in celebrating and witnessing our faith
- in transforming the world through Catholic education
- that Catholic education includes spiritual growth and fulfillment
- that learning is a lifelong journey
- that all can learn and develop their gifts
- in building Christ-centred communities for service to one another
- that all have rights, roles and responsibilities for which they are accountable
- that Catholic education is a shared responsibility in which parents have a primary role

MISSION

The mission of Edmonton Catholic Schools is to provide a Catholic education that inspires students to learn and that prepares them to live fully and to serve God in one another.

VISION

Our students will learn together, work together and pray together in answering the call to a faith-filled life of service.

EIGHT CHARACTERS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

- Community
- Rationality
- Tradition
- Spirituality
- Humanness
- Justice
- Sacramentality
- Hospitality

CORE VALUES

- Dignity & Respect
- Honesty
- Personal & Communal Growth
- Loyalty
- Fairness

A STATEMENT OF 21ST CENTURY LEARNING IN EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS -

Preparing our students for a world not yet realized

In keeping with our Foundation Statement, the students and staff of Edmonton Catholic Schools commit to 21st century learning. In support of hopeful Christ-centred living, in a society transformed by globalization, technological innovation, and human ingenuity, 21st century learning complements our commitment as a Catholic community of learners, leaders and educators.

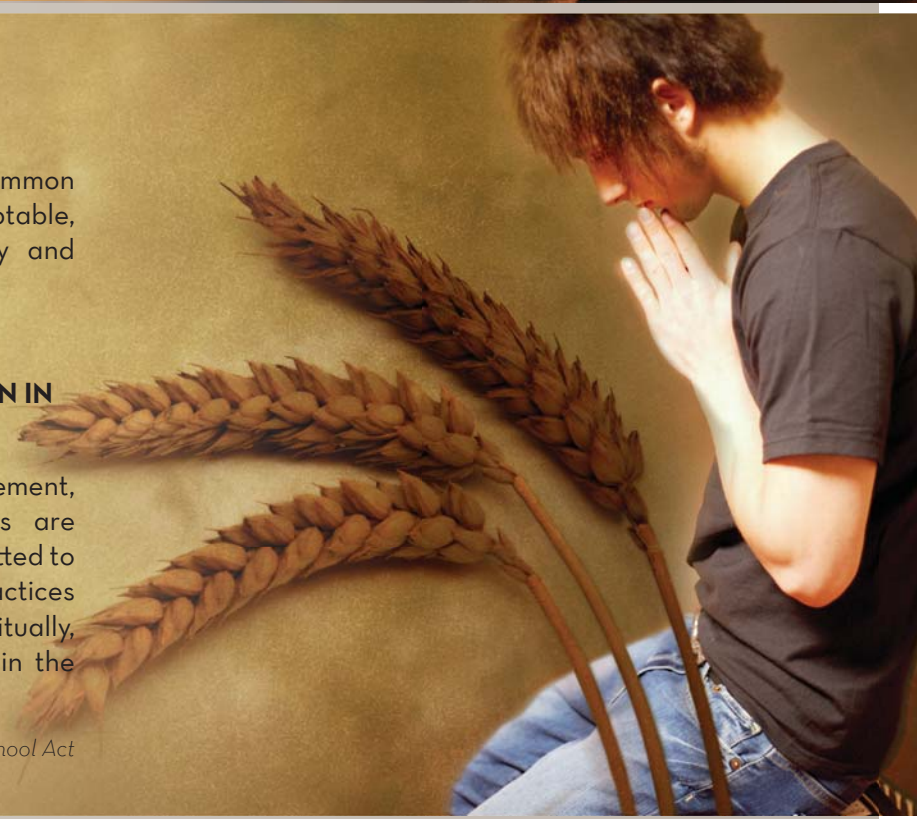
Edmonton Catholic Schools fosters faith-based learning that deeply engages all staff and students in 21st century learning opportunities. All facets of the learning system -- curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional learning, accountability and resource allocation -- are in support of 21st century learning. Students will be creative, critical-thinking global citizens, analysts, communicators and producers engaged in learning that is conceptual and authentic within an inquiry-based environment.

Guided by our moral compass and focused on the common good, students and staff will be self-directed, adaptable, discerning and curious, as they engage individually and collaboratively in 21st century learning.

A DEFINING STATEMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN OUR DISTRICT

In accordance with our District Foundation Statement, all *resident students and their parents/caregivers are welcomed into our schools. The Learning Team is committed to collaborating, identifying, applying and monitoring practices enabling all students to reach their potential, spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically and academically within the Programs of Study alongside their peers.

*resident student as defined by the School Act



Eight Characters of Catholic Education

COMMUNITY

Catholics approach God together and commit to living as a community, a people of God in the world. The Catholic community, which extends over time and space, finds its life source in the traditional belief that the church represents the mystical Body of Christ. The Catholic community serves the common good of society by integrating faith and culture, thereby transforming society.

*"In one Spirit we are all baptized into one body."
(1 Corinthians 12:13)*

TRADITION

Tradition is foundational to the formation of the Catholic community. Tradition means holding on to the life of the community, being open to the continuing action of the Holy Spirit and paying homage to the God who acts in the history of a people. The focus of tradition is clarified by a vision of the future in Christ.

*"We must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it."
(Hebrews 2:1)*

HUMANNESS

God affirms the essential goodness of the human condition in becoming human in Jesus. A Catholic attitude towards the human condition is decidedly positive and compassionate. Catholics embrace their humanness as a gift, celebrate the essential goodness of being human, take delight in the enjoyment of human living, tolerate human imperfections, and are merciful in the face of human sinfulness.

*"And being found in human form, he humbled himself."
(Philippians 2:8)*

SACRAMENTALITY

All of creation is the ordinary medium of God's outreach to the human family. God communicates to humans...through everything and anything of our world. Everything created is good because it is of God. A Catholic attitude to the world affirms the world as so good as to be sacramental. That is, it is made holy and is sacred.

*"God saw that everything was made, and indeed it was very good."
(Genesis, 1:31)*

RATIONALITY

Throughout Catholic history, reason has played an important role in the search for truth. The critical and speculative powers of reason allow for an active and open stance in relation to the truth. Catholics seek truth rationally and critically as well as through appreciation and respect. Rationality encourages faith to seek understanding.

*"Know how you ought to answer everyone."
(Colossians 4:6)*

SPIRITUALITY

Catholic spirituality is rooted in the life of the Trinity and is lived "according to the Spirit." Spirituality has to do with the way Catholics live their beliefs. Spirituality consists in letting God be present in each moment of the day, becoming attuned to God's presence in the ups and downs of life. Prayer and a commitment to the moral and ethical values of the gospel provide the opening to God's presence.

*"You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."
(Leviticus 19:2)*

JUSTICE

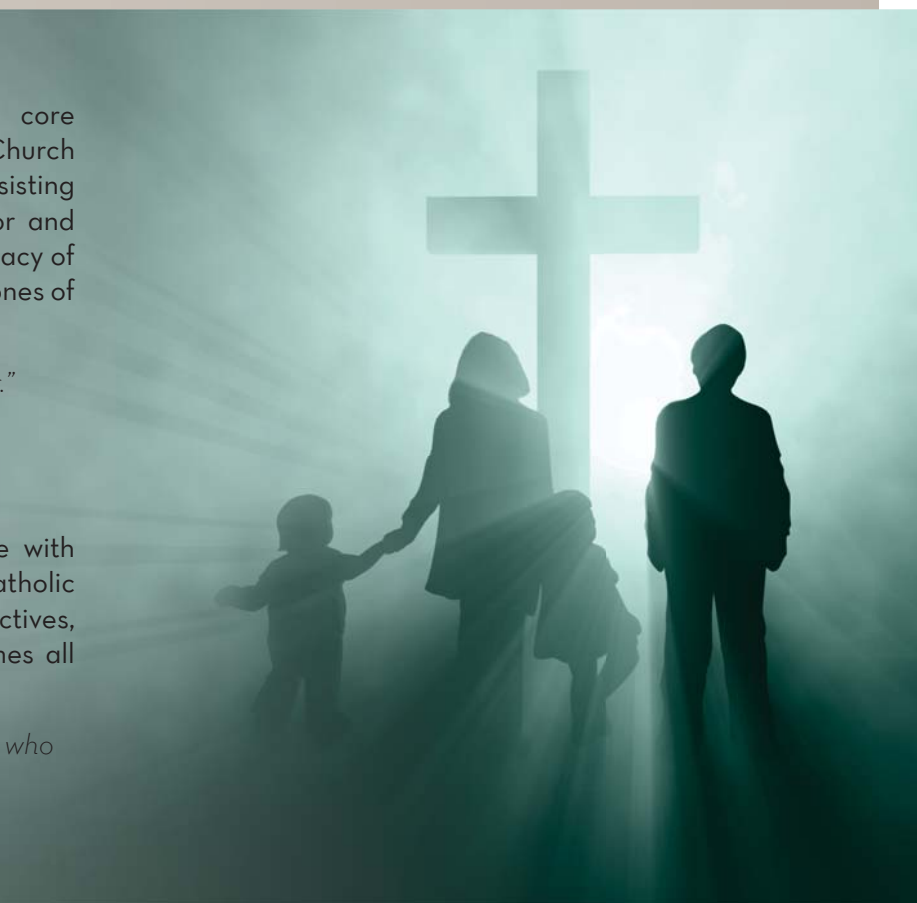
Catholic social teaching establishes justice as a core commitment of faith and a sign of the Reign of God. Church statements capture the scriptural basis for justice, insisting that Catholics have a preferential option for the poor and marginalized. The dignity of the human person, the primacy of both the common good and of workers are the cornerstones of Catholic social justice.

*"He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor."
(Luke 4:18)*

HOSPITALITY

Being Catholic entails an abiding love for all people with commitment to their welfare, to rights and justice. The Catholic community is inclusive of diverse peoples and perspectives, is free of discrimination and sectarianism and welcomes all peoples especially those most in need.

*"Whoever welcomes me, welcomes not me, but the one who sent me."
(Mark 9:37)*



Our Distinctiveness

Catholic education is unique in that it begins with Jesus Christ who is the foundation for the life, curriculum and culture of Catholic schools. He inspires our staff to view each child as a precious gift and sacred responsibility.

At every milestone of learning, Christ is there, igniting a child's curiosity and desire to learn.

Catholic schools enable students to learn together, work together and pray together in answering the call to a faith-filled life of service.

In Catholic schools, students hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, students are challenged to live the good news of this Gospel message in their daily lives.

Catholic schools are places of welcome, witness and wonder where God permeates our words and actions. In Catholic schools, staff model and support behaviours necessary to nurture these traits.

Catholic schools provide an environment that encourages not only high academic achievement but also personal growth for the whole school community.

ARCHBISHOP RICHARD SMITH (Archdiocese of Edmonton)

"I call you friends." (John 15:15) Young people understand well the importance and significance of friendship. In its essence, the mission of Catholic education is to lead our students to encounter the love of the Lord for them and to encourage them, by both word and example, to live in a relationship of close friendship with Him. Naturally, we provide them with knowledge and skills necessary for life, and we do so with the excellence that people have come to expect from Catholic schools. At the same time the Catholic school community is more. As part of the mystery of the Church it is a place where we help our students know, love and follow the Lord both now and throughout their adult lives.

BISHOP DAVID MOTIUK (Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton)

Since parents have given life to their children, they are considered the "first educators" of their offspring. Parents create a family atmosphere animated by love where the personal growth, faith, and social education of their children is fostered.

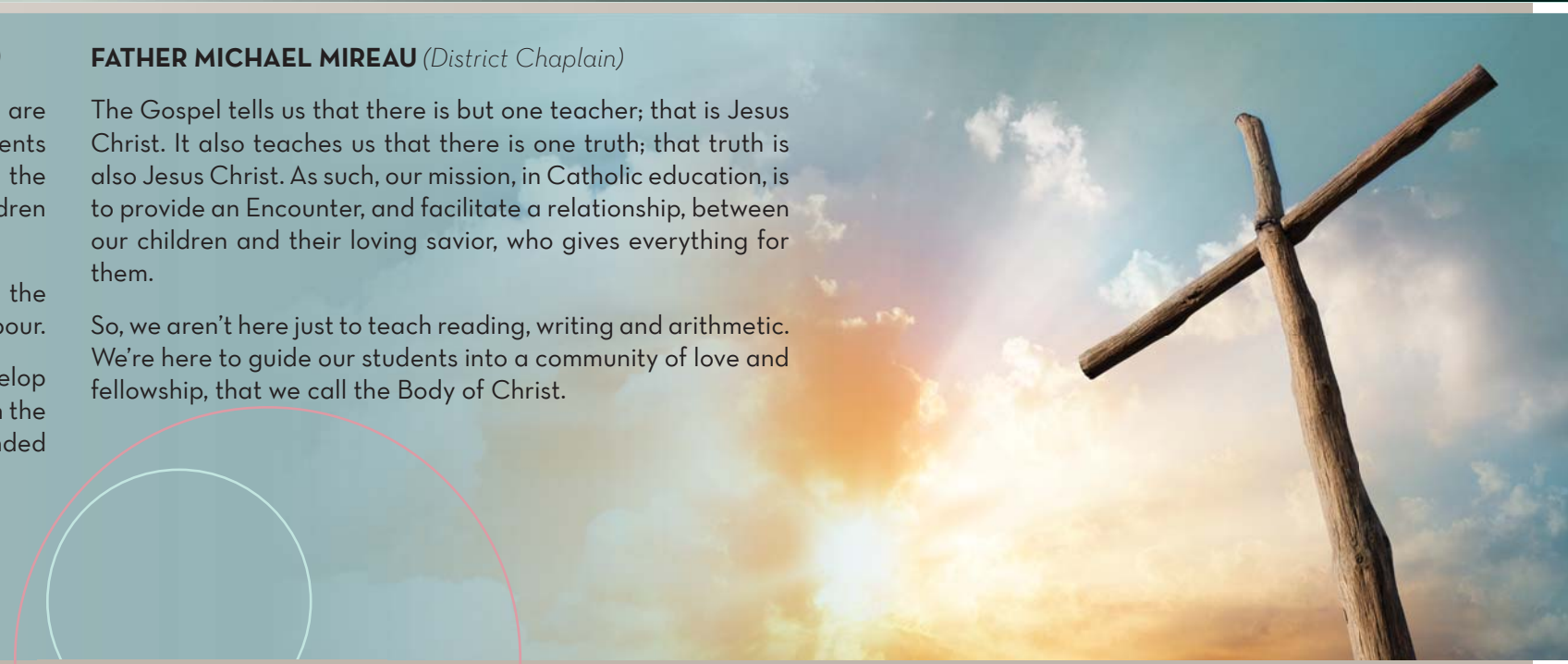
The mission of Catholic education is to assist parents in the education of their children in love toward God and neighbour.

Catholic schools, in particular, help young people develop their own personality in such a way that they grow through the grace of baptism into the new person of faith and life intended by God.

FATHER MICHAEL MIREAU (District Chaplain)

The Gospel tells us that there is but one teacher; that is Jesus Christ. It also teaches us that there is one truth; that truth is also Jesus Christ. As such, our mission, in Catholic education, is to provide an Encounter, and facilitate a relationship, between our children and their loving savior, who gives everything for them.

So, we aren't here just to teach reading, writing and arithmetic. We're here to guide our students into a community of love and fellowship, that we call the Body of Christ.



EDMONTON CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



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