



OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

April 2026

Dear Friends in Christ,

Catholic Education: A Shared Mission Rooted in Christ

Catholic schools in Alberta are a unique gift. They are part of our province's publicly funded education system, and they are deeply connected to the mission of the Catholic Church.

As you know, our schools are more than places to learn about things. Catholic schools strive to be communities where students are formed intellectually, spiritually, and morally. Catholic schools help students to know their dignity as people made in the image and likeness of God and to develop their many gifts and talents. Catholic schools help students to grow in love and service of others and to live meaningful lives rooted in the Gospel of Christ.

Because Catholic schools share in the mission of the Church, they also maintain a special relationship with their local bishop. I am very pleased, as your new Archbishop, to serve as the shepherd of this local Church and to help guide and support our Catholic schools.

The Church has long recognized that education is an essential part of her mission and, you might say, in the course of history, the Church invented schools to help people encounter Christ while receiving a strong academic education that prepares them for life.

As your Archbishop, one of my most important responsibilities is to work together with school boards, educators, and Catholic education partners to ensure that Catholic schools remain connected to the faith, tradition, and teaching of the Church in whose name they carry out their important work.

Although I was only installed as Archbishop toward the end of January this year, I have already begun to exercise leadership and build relationships through visits to some of our Catholic schools and by meetings with Catholic school trustees, leaders, teachers, and staff.

As you know, in recent years the Church around the world has been engaged in the Synod on Synodality, which invites all of us to renew how we listen, collaborate and discern together.

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A key theme of the Synod is co-responsibility. This means that all the baptized share responsibility for the mission of the Church. Bishops, priests, educators, parents, and students each contribute their gifts to the life and mission of the Church.

Within Catholic education, this shared responsibility is lived through the partnership of families, educators, and school leaders along with the leaders of the Church. Together we work to build school communities where faith can grow and where young people are formed to live the Gospel in the world.

As Archbishop, I have a particular role within this shared mission. As shepherd of the people of the Archdiocese of Edmonton, I try to encourage unity, foster participation, and help guide the church in discerning how the Holy Spirit is leading us forward together with the universal Church.

As an expression of this listening approach, my predecessor, Archbishop Richard Smith, established a Catholic Education Student Advisory Council made up of two high school students from each of the ten Catholic school divisions in the Archdiocese. I was blessed to meet and listen to these fine young people in February. The insights and feedback that they are giving on their experience as young people in Catholic schools and in our world today is impressive and helpful to my discernment as Archbishop.

In my short time here, I have also discovered that our Catholic Bishops in Alberta and the Catholic school divisions are working on building and strengthening Catholic education in our province through the Assurance of Catholic Education process which we are implementing. Across Alberta and the Northwest Territories, Catholic education partners – including Catholic Bishops, Catholic school trustees, superintendents, educators, and Catholic education advocates – are working together to ensure that Catholic schools are providing excellent education for their students.

This process is inspired by the province of Alberta's Assurance Framework, which reviews how schools are supporting student success and meeting the needs of families and communities. Catholic education participates fully in this framework while also safeguarding the distinct mission and identity of Catholic schools.

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Through this dialogue, collaboration, and shared responsibility among Catholic Education partners, Catholic schools will continue to grow as communities of faith, learning, and service. They will continue to provide a tremendous support to parents who are called to be the first educators of their children, especially in matters of faith.

As you can see, Catholic education is one of the central ways that we carry out the mission of the Church with a loving co-responsibility: parents, students, educators, parish communities and Church leaders.

As your new Archbishop, I am deeply committed to walking with all of you to help our young people to know Christ, serve others, and build a more just and hope-filled world in Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Stephen A. Hero

✠ Most Rev. Stephen A. Hero
Archbishop of Edmonton