



## Mary, Mother of God: A Guiding Light for Catholic Education

The month of May holds a special place in the hearts of Catholic Christians around the world, recognized in the Church's liturgical calendar as a time of profound devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. Within the Edmonton Catholic School Division, this month takes on added significance. Mary is not only our spiritual mother - she is also our patron saint, a guiding presence who walks with us in faith, formation, and education.

Mary's role in the life of the Church is both foundational and inspirational. She is revered not only as the mother of Jesus but also as the first disciple and evangelizer. Her life was a continual affirmation of faith - a steady, resounding "yes" to God. This unwavering trust is perhaps most beautifully revealed in the story of the Visitation. Rather than proclaiming the Good News with grand speeches, Mary offers her testimony through presence - by carrying Christ within her and sharing that quiet, powerful witness with her cousin Elizabeth.

While Scripture preserves only a few of Mary's words, her impact on salvation history is profound. From the moment of the Annunciation to her presence at the foot of the Cross and beyond, Mary accompanied Jesus through every stage of His earthly mission. Her life was a journey of surrender and transformation, defined by love and sustained by faith. Through her openness to God's will, Mary became a vessel of divine grace, shaping the course of history through humble obedience.

The early Church recognized this profound role and honored her with the title *Theotokos* - a Greek term meaning "God-Bearer" or "Mother of God." This title, officially affirmed at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., upholds the Church's core belief in Jesus Christ as fully divine and fully human. Today, *Theotokos* remains a central expression of Marian devotion in both Eastern and Western traditions, reminding us that by drawing close to Mary, we are led ever more deeply into the mystery of her Son.

In Catholic education, Mary continues to be a model of discipleship, compassion, and wisdom. Her example calls us to nurture not only minds but hearts, to encourage faith alongside knowledge, and to journey together in a spirit of grace and humility. As we honor Mary throughout the month of May, we recommit ourselves to her example - one of steadfast faith, selfless love, and a willingness to let God's plan unfold through us.

May Mary, Mother of God and patron of our schools, continue to guide us in all we do, helping us to grow as learners, believers, and disciples of Christ.

Fr. Julian Bilyj  
ECSD Chaplain