



Dear Parents,

This week will be a busy one for our school community. Halloween is on Wednesday. For those **Kindergarten and 100 Voices students in our morning classes**, they will have the opportunity to visit all the classes in the morning to display their costumes. **Afternoon Kinder and 100Voices** students may come to school dressed in their costumes. For all other **students in grades 1-6**, we would ask that students come in their regular school clothing and change into their costumes after lunch. At 1:00pm, parents are welcome to join all St. Martha students and staff in the gym where we will have a costume parade. **As you plan your child's costume for the day**, we would thank you for being mindful that we have very young children at St. Martha and we would thank you for ensuring that students do not bring any imitation or read weapons (swords, knives, guns, etc.) to school as part of their costume and to ensure that any costumes are not scary or gory. Thank you for your support in this.

The St. Martha School Society will be holding a fall fundraiser with the proceeds going towards the purchase of Chromebooks. We will be selling Stawnichy's Ukrainian Sausage. Your child will be bringing home a letter of explanation and an order form today. Attached, you will find a second copy here. Additional order form sheets are also available at the school office.

Important Events in November

November 9th: Remembrance Day Ceremony in the gym at 10:45am. Parents and families are welcome to join our school community.

November 12th: No School due to day in lieu for Remembrance Day.

November 16th: Hot Lunch and theme day: Read My Shirt Day

November 17th: St. Martha School Mass at Good Shepherd Parish at 4:00pm.

November 19th: Report Cards released on PowerSchool

November 22nd: Demonstration of Learning from 12:30-4:30pm and 5:30-7:30pm. Teachers will be unavailable from 4:30-5:30pm to allow them to eat their supper.

November 26th: Immunization for any St. Martha students who are missing vaccinations.

Nurturing Spirits
and Filling Hearts



St. Martha Catholic Elementary School 2018 Fall Fundraiser Stawnichy's Ukrainian Sausage

Dear St. Martha Parents:

We hope everyone has had a fantastic start to their school year! It is fall fundraising time and we are really excited to announce our fall fundraiser - Mundare Sausage.

Beginning Monday, October 29, 2018 until Monday November 26, 2018 the students of the St. Martha School community will be involved in our school's fall fundraiser for the year - selling Stawnichy's Sausage, Perogies and Cabbage rolls!

All of the money raised will go directly to support our St. Martha students by enriching their learning and learning environment. Monies raised will go towards the purchase of technology (Chromebooks and iPads) for our students. We need your help to be able to continue to support our students.

Please find attached a fundraising sheet which shows the items available. You need only submit one form with your information on it per family, as well as the payment for the total that you collected. This form needs to be returned to the school by Monday November 26, 2018. Our pickup date for orders will be *Wed.* December 19, 2018 time to be announced. All cheques need to be made out to St. Martha SAC.

We know that fundraising is not a simple task and that it requires our students to spend time and perseverance to collect orders from family members and friends. This hard work will be the primary reason for the success of this fundraiser. As a way to show our appreciation to the St. Martha children in the five families who sell the most Stawnichy's Mundare food products, will receive a pizza lunch with Ms. Coates and Mrs. Laba!

Once again, we thank you for your generosity to our school fundraiser for this fall. With your continued support, we know that the St. Martha students will enjoy long lasting benefits.

Thank you,

Angie De Benedetto,
St. Martha SAC



WALKING TOGETHER IN GOD'S LOVE

November 2018

"Let us thank God for His great love in having blessed Edmonton with the gift of giving so much joy, so much care and so much love...to all those who in the last 100 years in educating and preparing the young people to know, to love and to serve God."

~ Message of St. Mother Teresa to Edmonton Catholic Schools for our 100th Anniversary ~

We are so fortunate in this day and age to have made connections to modern saints during their lifetimes. 30 years ago, Mother Teresa sent us congratulations on our centennial anniversary. Her message is one which endures, for the love of God remains always at the centre of all that we do.

November 2, 2018 marks exactly 130 years since we opened our first Edmonton Catholic School in 1888. On that day, schools across the District will join in a special celebration of gratitude for this legacy and for our present and future. Our story is one which speaks to the ongoing tenacity and advocacy of the nuns who were our first leaders, and of the Catholic community since then. This is followed by Catholic Education Sunday on November 4, which provides us all with the opportunity to give thanks for and to advocate for publicly funded Catholic education in our Province. Visit our [website](#) to learn more.

We are pleased to have entered into an agreement with St. Joseph's College at the University of Alberta to support the Certificate in Catholic Education as an excellent opportunity for pre-service teachers to focus their formation on living out their vocation to Catholic education. This partnership offers us mutual support in training our future Catholic teachers so that they are prepared to help our children grow in Christ.

The end of the month of October is always very exciting for us as it is the time when several of our accountability measures are made public. We are very proud of our student achievement. There are 2 sets of results, the grade 6 Provincial Achievement Tests and the Diploma Examinations, that give us feedback on how our students are performing relative to the Province.

The Accountability Pillar, October 2018, our overall report card from the Province, brought great news! Edmonton Catholic Schools had better results than the Province in 12 of 16 measures and no areas were identified as needing improvement. The high school completion 3-year (85.6%) and 5-year (89.1%) rates are 7.6 % and 5.7% above the Province respectively. Our drop-out rate (1.2%) is almost half that of the Province. Parental involvement and Diploma excellence in our District 'improved significantly' according to the Accountability Pillar. For more detail visit www.ecsd.net or click here for the [Accountability Pillar](#) and [PAT and Diploma](#) results.

Another measure that we use to assess our performance in many areas and to set targets for growth is our own District Satisfaction Survey. This vital survey gathers opinions from students, parents, and staff on individual schools and on District operations. Every student from grade 4-12 will complete the survey, as will all staff. Every household will receive one parent survey per child enrolled in an Edmonton Catholic School. Please respond to each survey separately from the point of view of each child's educational experience. It is so important that you let your voice be heard. You can either return your parent survey to your child's school or use the postage paid envelope and Canada Post. The District Satisfaction Survey will run from November 26 - December 7. Thank you in advance for your participation.

November, which brings Remembrance Day and Holodomor Memorial Day, provides us with excellent opportunities to reflect on the injustices in the world and to examine the importance of our actions in bringing justice and peace to our communities and to the world. This is a message that our Holy Father shares, holding Saint Mother Teresa up as a model of action for us:

Carry peace with you to give it to others with your life, with a smile, with works of charity. Saint Mother Teresa, pray for us! (Pope Francis, Sept. 5/18)

Sincerely,

**Joan Carr
Superintendent**

CHAPTER 2: TWO SUBTLE ENEMIES OF HOLINESS

While Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate: The Call to Holiness in Today's World* will take some time to digest and to unfold the gift that Pope Francis has given us, the Holy Father reminds us that we are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.

In Chapter Two, Pope Francis warns us against two obstacles that may hinder our journey towards holiness: *Gnosticism* and *Pelagianism*. While these words may be difficult to understand, *Gnosticism* and *Pelagianism* were essentially two heresies that arose in the early church. They were corruptions of the real Christian message. *Gnosticism* claimed that only knowledge was necessary for salvation, saying that the mind was good and the body was bad and evil. *Pelagianism* focused on the will. It was the belief that one could be saved on the basis of their good works alone; there was no need of God's grace or mercy to help them.

In his exhortation, Pope Francis states that these two distortions of the Christian message still exist in our community today and may lead us away from the true path towards holiness. We may fall into the trap of believing that our understanding of the faith is the only right way, basing what we believe on our own subjective experiences. This is present-day Gnosticism. The biggest temptation is to pick-and-choose those aspects of Christianity that we agree with and reject the rest. We love God, but we do not want to live by Christ's commandments. We love Christ, but we find the Church too burdensome.

At the same time, we may fall into the trap of believing that our holiness only depends on our good works. We may feel good because we are doing so much and look down on others who do less or do not spend as much time in service to their parish or local community. This is contemporary Pelagianism. We may think we are perfect and have no need of God's grace, but we need God's presence in our lives. We cannot buy God's friendship with our good works. Rather, we recall Jesus' commandment of love: love God and love neighbor. These are not two formulas but two faces; the face of God reflected in the face of our neighbor.

In the end, Chapter Two provides us with advice on how we can be good Christians. The answer is clear: "We have to do, each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount" (Pope Francis). Because the life of a Christian is a constant battle, we need God's strength and courage to reject evil and to proclaim the Gospel.

Sandra Talarico, Religious Education Consultant

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Dr. Eugenia Kowalczyk, Principal - Catholic Identity

Identity is complex. Many of us would describe ourselves based on our personal, social, professional, or cultural characteristics. I might describe myself as being Italian, or that I am a wife, daughter, or sister. Further I share that I am an educator. Ultimately, I could articulate that I am Catholic and a person of faith. While these labels appear simple, the totality of their parts creates a kaleidoscope of what it means to be human.

Catholic identity is at the heart of Catholic education. Who we are as people of God within our educational communities, our family, and our church is shaped and influenced by our life experiences and our social interactions. Catholic schools serve as the fertile soil where seeds of faith are sowed and nurtured. How blessed we are knowing that when we send our children to a Catholic school we can rest assured that their social, academic, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are looked after. What a precious gift we have in Catholic education.

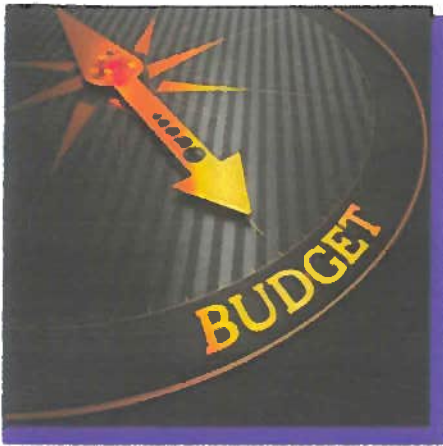
The great philosopher Thomas Groome (2002) explained how, "we need a sense of identity to live humanly, without it we literally feel lost. From the Latin *identitas*, meaning "the same, repeatedly," identity is that which holds together a continuous sense of our human "being" as a person or a community. It is the metaphorical glue that binds who we are as individuals and who we are in community. It is who we are and how we live...identity is the center that holds...otherwise...things fall apart."

Catholic identity provides each of us to view the world using a Catholic lens. Together we strive to understand and develop a deeper relationship with Christ.

According to another great philosopher Walter Feinberg (2006), religious identity is constructed systematically and formally across many landscapes; school, church, and home. It is in these different places "where students learn the practices, rituals, beliefs, and commitments that distinguish their religion from others, and where they take on the identity of a specific faith community."

Realizing that the faith formation of our children is central to their education, we collaborate to understand the shared responsibility between parents, educators, clergy, and community. Together we work in mutual cooperation and understanding towards a common vision of what comprises faith formation of children within the broader landscape of personal identity.

Inspired by the late Sr. Annata Brockman to love tenderly, act justly, and walk humbly with our Lord, let us remain faithful to the commitment of Catholic education. Might we never forget the most precious gift of all; our students each one created in the likeness and image of God. Their Catholic identity, inspired by the Holy Spirit, calls us all to give witness to our faith and remember that Christ is the reason for Catholic schools. In answering the question, "who do you say I am?" the response, "a child of God" paves the understanding of how together, in communion, we nurture our Catholic identity.



Edmonton Catholic Schools

Online Financial Budget Survey



**YOUR CHILD!
YOUR VOICE!**

Edmonton Catholic Schools believes it is essential to involve parents in providing input into the budget process. In preparation for the upcoming 2019-2020 budget it is important that the district gather as much information as possible. Therefore, as a parent of Edmonton Catholic Schools, your feedback will provide a valuable contribution in the decision-making process.

We would like to gather your input through an online survey. The survey can be accessed through the District Website, School Website, Powerschool or by using the URL address provided.

URL Address: Click on the following link or enter the address in the web browser

<http://financialservicessurvey.ecsd.net/>

District Website: Go to <http://ecsd.net> then go to the slider indicating the Online Financial Budget Survey and follow the directions.

Powerschool: Parents log on to Powerschool as you normally would to check your child's progress. Once in Powerschool, click on the tab "Financial Budget Survey". This tab will take you directly to the online survey.

The survey is open from November 1st to November 16th, 2018. We encourage all families to fill out the survey. The survey will only take a few minutes to complete.

Survey results will be shared with the Edmonton Catholic School District Budget Committee in January for consideration during the 2019-2020 budget process.

