

Dear Friends,

In the season of Easter our hearts turn to reflect on Christ's death and resurrection. "*He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures*" (1 Corinthians 15:4).

The students who attend our Catholic schools can help us understand the resurrected life of Jesus more deeply. Pope Francis assures us that Christ, who "wants to make us sharers in the new life of the resurrection," is "the true youthfulness of a world grown old" (*Christus Vivit*, 32). When I look at the exuberance and joy of these young people, I am reminded of the heart of our risen Saviour.

Of course, there is real pain, too, in the lives of young people in our schools. They know the brokenness of this world. They've experienced emotional depths like those familiar to the prophets of old: "*Therefore I said: Look away from me, let me weep bitter tears; do not try to comfort me for the destruction of my beloved people*" (Isaiah 22:4). In their own way, they have a connection with the unutterable sorrows of our Lord who suffered betrayal.

Young people, I realize you are no strangers to the darkness and desolations of Good Friday, or the grief and shock of Holy Saturday. I hear you. My heart goes out to you.

Never forget that Easter Sunday comes after Holy Saturday. As Catholics, our faith gives us a hope that reaches beyond death, beyond despair and confusion. The Holy Gospels tell of an empty tomb, of rejoicing angels, and the Risen Lord.

I have observed that many young people have a remarkable openness to the message of Easter. You are moved by the promise of a resurrection that can defeat every shadow of death. As we enter these summer months, then, let me invite you to keep following Christ into the light of the resurrection, the love of God, and the hope of everlasting life.

And to all the staff, students and parents of Edmonton Catholic School District: I pray that God will continue to bless each one of you, all the days of your life.

✠Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton