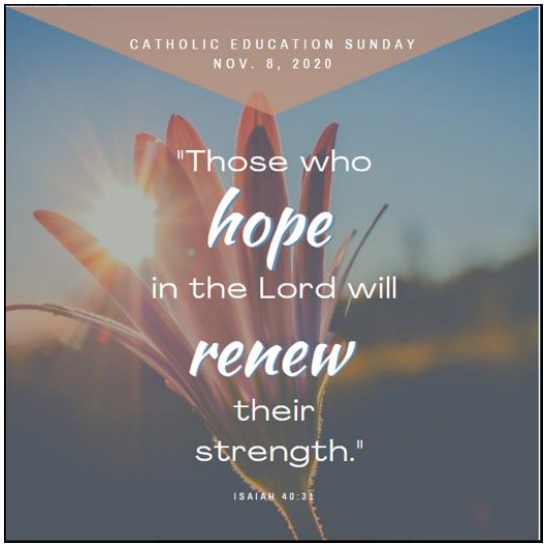
Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools

Nov. 6, 2020
Superintendent's Update: Students, Parents/Legal Guardians, and Staff

As we approach the end of the first quarter in our learning journey this year, we look forward to a well-earned break next week. Our students and staff have worked hard over the past two-plus months, and their efforts have not gone unnoticed. I am continually impressed and amazed by how everyone has responded to our current challenges and how we are navigating these many challenges together. May this fall break be time of rest, family, and rejuvenation for all of our students and staff!

This weekend, we will celebrate *Catholic Education Sunday* (November 8). The theme for this year – *Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31)* – is particularly relevant during this pandemic. Catholic schools provide stability, moving us forward even in times of hardship and uncertainty. This is because we know that our hope is in God, who is forever faithful, always among us, and forever holds us in His loving arms.



Please watch this video featuring members of our faith and learning community sharing what Catholic education means to them. I also encourage you to attend, if possible, your local parish on Catholic Education Sunday. Be sure to check out the beautiful school banners that will be on display in their respective parishes, which are our close partners in Catholic education.

On October 29, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health reported escalating numbers of cases of COVID-19 in Alberta, especially in the Edmonton and Calgary Zones. Our Division has experienced a parallel increase in confirmed positive cases over the past month or so. Given the rising spread of the virus, both provincially and locally, our staff are continuing to work closely with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and surrounding school authorities to enact measures necessary to mitigate the risks of further spread of the virus.

As I mentioned last week, the province recently announced new public health measures in the Edmonton Zone, including a mandatory 15-person limit on all social and family gatherings. Additionally, AHS recommends that cohorts be limited to no more than three (your core household, your school, and one other sport or social cohort; young children who attend child care can be part of four cohorts). The government also recommends that non-medical masks be worn in all indoor work settings, except when alone in workspaces, such as offices or cubicles, where one can be safely distanced from others or if appropriate barriers are in place. We ask that everyone follow these, and all, mandatory and voluntary protocols.

I remind you to complete the recently updated *COVID-19 Alberta Health Daily Checklist for Children Under 18*, available in English, French, and nine other languages, every day, **prior to** sending your child(ren) to school. If your child is ill or has any symptoms, even if they seem mild, please keep him or her at home, call 8-1-1, and follow all instructions for testing and isolating. Thank you for continually reinforcing how important it is to follow all health and safety protocols. AHS's *Guidance for Parents of Children Attending School and/or Childcare* provides helpful information and answers to frequently asked questions.

This week, on ***Remembrance Day*** (November 11), may we take focused time to remember and pay our respects to our veterans, many of whom have paid the ultimate sacrifice in service of our nation and its residents, as well as all members of the Canadian Forces who bravely serve our country in many places around the world. We are profoundly grateful for their service; may we never take our freedoms for granted. While Remembrance Day ceremonies may look different this year, our schools are still planning activities to honour this important day. Please reach out to your child(ren)'s school directly for details.



The Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools Education Foundation recently kicked off its annual **Cash Raffle Fundraiser**. Dollars raised through this campaign will enable the Foundation to purchase equipment and supplies that will support our students and help meet urgent classroom needs. Please support this worthy cause by purchasing your 50/50 raffle tickets online before December 3. Please note: you must be 18 or older to participate.

We continue to follow the direction of Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health and all levels of government on preparedness planning relative to COVID-19 and will update our *School Re-Entry Plan* as required. We will keep you informed through these weekly notices, our *Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021*, our website and social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) platforms, and other communication channels. Your child(ren)'s teacher(s) and school principal(s) can best address your concerns as they apply to your child(ren's) school.

We encourage you to follow all public health guidelines, including the new voluntary measures that Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health announced last week. Credible information about COVID-19 is available from Health Canada, the Government of Alberta, AHS, and the World Health Organization.

As always, we thank you for your ongoing prayers and support as we continue to foster the academic and spiritual growth of our students in these most unusual times. As I visit and connect, either face-to-face or online, with our school communities and staff, I am inspired by the care that I see our staff, students, and families expressing for one another. I leave you with powerful words from the Second Letter of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians that I believe capture the spirit that we have in our Division:

"We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right,
because your faith is growing abundantly,
and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing." (2 Thessalonians 1:3)

Please accept my sincere thanks for the love, joy, and hope that you all provide to each other daily. Your spirit and good works are truly holy and I know that with our continued care for one another, we will emerge from the pandemic as an even stronger community of faith and learning.

Many blessings to all students, staff, and families as you enjoy the fall break. We look forward to seeing our students and staff back in our schools on November 16.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools