

LETTER FROM THE SASKATCHEWAN BISHOPS Catholic Schools in Saskatchewan

November 25, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Catholic education has existed since before Saskatchewan entered into confederation in 1905. We recognize and value the work done by our religious and school divisions, both past and present. Today, Catholic school enrolments have grown to nearly 40,000 students. While parents choose Catholic education for diverse reasons, we acknowledge their desire to enroll their children in these faith-filled communities as ongoing support of our schools.

Catholic schools in Saskatchewan are founded on a common faith in Jesus Christ as understood within the Catholic tradition. Religious instruction, religious practice, value formation and faith development are integral to every area of the curriculum in a Catholic school. These faith communities provide a learning environment in which each student's unique, God-given gifts and talents are fostered.

We all share a role in introducing children to Jesus Christ and the faith, hope and loving service which flow from the Gospel values and teachings.

The Catholic Church and Catholic schools have a social mandate rooted in gospel values to be open to all, especially the most vulnerable in our society. Catholic schools have a two-pronged obligation to remain grounded in the tradition and teachings of the Catholic Church, and to be receptive to families who choose Catholic education for their children. Just as it is part of the mission of the Church to welcome all, no matter where one is on their faith journey, it would be a great blessing if Catholic schools could keep their doors open to families who seek those elements that make Catholic education distinct.

As Bishops in the province of Saskatchewan, we offer our strong support for the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association's Theodore Appeal fundraising campaign. The *Schools You Can Believe In* fundraising campaign will be launched in our parish communities shortly. This campaign is necessary to cover the legal costs associated with appealing the judge's decision that the government of Saskatchewan no longer fund non-Catholics attending Catholic Schools.

As your Bishops, we encourage you to pray for Catholic education in our province, a privilege we presently have and now strive to protect. We would also invite you to prayerfully consider a financial donation to the *Schools You Can Believe In* fundraising campaign. Your support will allow Catholic school divisions to continue to focus on quality Catholic education for all those who enter our schools. Information on how to support the campaign can be found online at www.catholicedspirit.ca. Information about how to support the campaign will also come from your parish.

Yours in Christ,



Most Rev. Donald Bolen
Archbishop of Regina



Most Rev. Albert Thevenot
Bishop of Prince Albert



Most Rev. Murray Chatlain
Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas



Most Rev. Mark Hagemoen
Bishop of Saskatoon



Most Rev. Bryan Bayda
Ukrainian Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon