

The **Catholic Bishops**  
of **Alberta** and the  
**Northwest Territories**

Les **évêques catholiques**  
de l'**Alberta** et des  
**Territoires du Nord-Ouest**

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September 1, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

*Uniting Ourselves in Prayer as Schools Reopen*

We are now at the cusp of the school reopening. The announcement over the past weeks of the Provincial and Territorial plans for the reopening of schools, and the subsequent announcements from the various educational systems in Alberta and the Northwest Territories in preparation for the return of over half a million students, have met with varied reactions. They reveal the anticipation and hopes, as well as the anxiety and concerns, of families, teachers, school administrators and staff as they rise to meet a variety of challenges presented by the global pandemic.

As Christians, we need, more than ever, to express our support to the families and the communities that will nurture and facilitate the education and formation of our youth. We also need to acknowledge with gratitude the teachers, administrators and staff as they enter the frontlines as essential workers in the midst of the reopening, with new protocols and procedures for the health and safety of everyone and for the creation of an atmosphere of “near-normal” conditions in our Catholic schools.

The Alberta Bishops are encouraged by the GrACE initiative of the *Novena for A Safe and Blessed Return to School* of our over 183,000 students returning to Catholic schools and of all teachers and staff. We offered this Novena from 28 August to 5 September 2020. Please continue to seek the intercession of the Blessed Mother for our students, and, indeed, for all of us, her children.

With you, we offer our humble petition to God for the safe return and well-being of our children, educators and staff, and the well-being of their families. We ask the Lord to provide us all with His grace, comfort, and protection.

Yours in Christ,

Catholic Bishops of Alberta and NWT



Most Reverend Richard W. Smith  
Archbishop of Edmonton



Most Reverend William McGrattan  
Bishop of Calgary



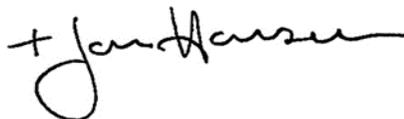
Most Reverend Paul Terrio  
Bishop of St. Paul



Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR  
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan



Most Reverend David Motiuk  
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of  
Edmonton



Most Reverend Jon Hansen, CSsR  
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith