

November 2020 Newsletter

Dear Parents/Caregivers:

Today we pray for the family, friends, students and colleagues of Meghan Weis, the teacher from Our Lady of the Prairies, who was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident on October 29th.



Loving Father, you sent your Son into the world to redeem us by his Cross and Resurrection. Send your Spirit upon us today to make us stewards of your gifts and witnesses of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Eternal God, whose wisdom is beyond our understanding, surround the family and school communities of Meghan Weis with your love. Through the intercession of our Most Blessed Mother, Mary, the Mother of God, protect and guide her family, friends, and colleagues. Come live in their hearts, console their grief, and strengthen them to meet the days to come.

As you washed Meghan in the waters of baptism, welcome her into the life of heaven. Eternal rest grant upon her O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God Rest In Peace. In company with Christ, who died and now lives, may she rejoice in Your kingdom, where all our tears are wiped away. Unite us together again in one family, to sing your praise forever and ever. Amen.

NOVEMBER 2020 DATES TO REMEMBER

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| 8 | Catholic Education Sunday |
| 9 | Last Day for Quartermester 1 |
| 10 | First Day for New learning Session |
| 11 | Remembrance Day - No School |
| 12 | Remembrance Day Ceremony online - 11:00 am |
| 16 | School Advisory Council Meeting - 6:30 pm - Everyone welcome (Elections) |

Dec 3 Parent/Student/Teacher Conference - These will be online and more information will come to you shortly.

* Christmas Break Dec 21 to January 4

Learning Choice

We will soon be welcoming some students who will be transitioning from online to in-person learning as well as seeing some of our current brick and mortar students heading to online. We

will be connecting with students and parents very soon to indicate next steps for students to have a smooth transition.

Changes to schedules and cohorts

As there has been a significant rise in COVID-19 cases in our city and we are doing whatever we can to mitigate our risks, we will be making some **significant changes** to **some** of our schedules and cohort movements. In addition to our current sanitizing and distancing protocols we are enhancing our procedures.

- 1) We will maintain our homeroom cohorts at this time. Those students are together in all CORE subjects as a group.
- 2) We plan to begin a fixed-cohort complementary course schedule (formerly referred to as Options). This means all classes will remain with their homerooms for complementary courses and those courses will be assigned randomly with the exception of Music and French as they are prerequisites for certain high school courses. Music and French will host small groups from all the homerooms and will follow strict distancing guidelines. This will begin on Nov 10th.
- 3) As of October 28, all after-school sports require mask-use.
- 4) Effective October 28th, students and staff in Physical Education classes are required to wear their masks unless they are outside **and** socially distant.
- 5) We have staggered our lunch period; students are required to maintain social distance while eating.

Thank you for reinforcing the importance of these health measures as well as those in the greater community, with your child(ren).

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Father Michael Troy School will be observing Remembrance Day on November 12th at 11:00 a.m. online- Link to follow.

It will be a time to remember all those who have given their lives so we can enjoy the wonderful country we live in with all its freedoms and opportunities. Everyone is welcome to join our virtual celebration.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

As you are aware, we have extensive Crisis Management and Pandemic Plans in place. Our plan is in the form of Evacuations (fire) and Lock Downs. As a part of our plan, we have had a few fire drills and are also planning Lock Down practices. These practices will continue to

happen throughout the year to ensure that all students and staff will be well prepared to respond to a crisis situation both quickly and effectively.

A Newborn Psalm of Praise
By Fr. Glenn McDonald, CSB

Have you ever read a word or phrase that seemed to speak directly to you? Over the past few weeks, I have had several people draw my attention to these words: “We have no one to tell us how long it will last.”

This phrase comes from The Psalms, which is a book in the Bible. The Psalms are 150 short hymns that speak about human experience in relationship with God. There are two major categories of psalms: praise and lament. Psalms of praise articulate the joy of being happy or thankful to God. Psalms of lament capture the experience of sorrow or disappointment, and ask for God’s help.

“We have no one to tell us how long it will last,” comes from Psalm 74. When you read this line, what do you think of?

I immediately thought of COVID-19 and the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic. I found the words of Psalm 74 to be strangely comforting, not because they offered a solution to the pandemic that we all face, but because they give me a way to succinctly describe what the experience is like. I guess it is like going to a doctor with a list of mysterious pains and symptoms. Having the doctor give me a diagnosis may not cure my disease, but being able to name it is comforting.

When I ponder Psalm 74 and ask for God’s help, the Holy Spirit draws my mind to an unexpected image — parents and guardians. In particular, my mind recalls a baptism I did for one of our high school teachers who recently had a baby girl. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the family gathered together to celebrate the gift of everlasting life. Masks and social distancing could not suppress the psalm of praise and love that radiated from the parents and the newborn’s two older brothers during this beautiful moment.

I find this memory very comforting. Raising a child is inherently mysterious, open-ended, and challenging. Despite these uncertainties, people still choose to become parents and guardians, because they have an instinct that their love will find a way. We have no one to tell us how long the pandemic will last, but the example of parents and guardians reminds us that love will overcome.

God Calls Us



EACH BY NAME

November 2020

“To all believers, and to men and women of good will, we say: let us become creative artisans of peace, let us build social friendship, let us make our own the culture of dialogue. Honest, persistent and courageous dialogue is the antidote to distrust, division and violence. Dialogue dismantles at the outset the arguments for wars that destroy the fraternity to which our human family is called.”
(Pope Francis, *Appeal for Peace*, 10/20/2020)

Our Holy Father shared these words as part of the [International Meeting of Prayer For Peace](#). The theme of the meeting was “No one is saved alone. Peace and Fraternity.” The words of his homily, address, and the appeal for peace are all grounded in a call to action for all of us. As we have learned during the pandemic, we cannot remain indifferent to the struggles of others. We are united in our humanity and we need to care for each other. Peace is something that we all need to take ownership of and work towards. I encourage you to take a few moments and read Pope Francis’ entire message at the link above or by visiting www.vatican.va. His words are very thought provoking in this month where we commemorate Remembrance Day and Holodomor (The Ukrainian Famine Genocide).

In light of the programming changes that have occurred due to the pandemic, our schools have revisited their school fees to ensure that they are still reflective of the activities and materials that were shared at the end of June. In instances where there has been a change, the fees were decreased appropriately. No new fees were added and no fee increases occurred. Please check PowerSchool for your fees for the year as they are now active.

We are committed to maintaining the integrity of our classroom and school cohorts. This means that our Division and schools have come up with innovative means to engage our families and community. As an example, our Board of Trustees held a Parent/Guardian Engagement on supporting your child’s mental health in late October. We had over 1800 people register for this virtual opportunity! You will notice over the upcoming months that our traditional face to face meetings will move to the virtual world. This will include things like Demonstration of Learning, Open Houses, Advent and Christmas concerts, and celebrations.

Sunday, November 8, 2020 has been named Catholic Education Sunday by the Bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories. The theme for this year is ***Those who hope in the Lord***

shall renew their strength (Isaiah 40:31) and is especially relevant and inspiring during this time of COVID. Catholic schools are best situated to move forward during hardship and uncertainty for we know that God is with us and holds us in the palm of His hand. The faithfulness of God gives us hope.

Please join us in praying the Novena for Catholic Education Sunday from October 29 - November 6, 2020 as we celebrate the great gift of publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta.

Have a wonderful month!

Sincerely,

Robert Martin
Chief Superintendent

Novena for Catholic Education Sunday

We are grateful for our Catholic Schools. Let us unite in prayer that the Holy Spirit may intercede for Catholic Education throughout Alberta by praying this traditional prayer daily from October 29 until November 6, 2020.

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

All: And kindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader: Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created,

All: And you will renew the face of the earth.

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit

you have taught the hearts of your faithful.

In the same Spirit

help us to attain our happiness in what is right

and to always rejoice in your peace and consolation.

May you inspire Catholic Education with the wisdom of the Holy Spirit

that it may remain faithful to your teachings and committed to living the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit:

All: as it was in the beginning, is now,

and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

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Click here for a [Letter to Parents and Guardians from Trustee Laura Thibert, Ward 77](#)