

St. Benedict Catholic Elementary School



OCTOBER 2020

Welcome to October! During this month we celebrate Thanksgiving. This year we can be thankful for our health and that we are able to have our schools open to students. It's important, during this pandemic, to consider all of those small blessings for which we can be thankful.

I want to thank all of the parents for your support as we navigate through this pandemic. We really appreciate your willingness to keep your children home if they have symptoms and to follow up with AHS by calling 811 for advice. We are thankful for your willingness to come pick up your children from school if they start to feel unwell. The students have been following our safety protocols very well. By working together, we will be able to minimize the impact Covid-19 will have on our school.

ON-LINE STUDENT INFORMATION VERIFICATION

You will have received a request to verify your children's information on PowerSchool. Please take the time to review all of the registration information and make changes where necessary and submit. It is essential that we have up-to-date phone numbers and emergency contacts.

**Bus fees and
Hockey Academy fees
due by October 5.**



HALLOWEEN ACTIVITIES

We are hoping to be able to do some activities for Halloween. There are many restrictions on what can happen due to Covid-19. At this time, our plan will be to have in-class Halloween activities. We will not be able to dress up in costumes because there are concerns about bringing materials from home due to sanitization requirements and it would be difficult to keep students physically distanced while getting into their costumes. We also are not allowed to have parents send in treats or food to share with the class. More details will be communicated to you after October 15.

SCHOOL PHOTOS

School picture day is Tuesday, October 6. If your child is in one of our on-line classes, you can book an appointment at Lifetouch Studios at 18124 102 Avenue. Please call 780-437-2431 to book an appointment. There are a number of days available: Oct. 21, 22, 23, Nov. 25, 26. If on-line students are unable to go to the studio and would need to come to the school, please call the school office to set up a time to come on October 6. Picture re-takes will be November 9.



COVID-19 INFORMATION

Edmonton Catholic Schools continually updates information in the Re-entry Plan. This information can be found on <https://www.ecsd.net/>

Alberta Health Services information for schools can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/k-to-12-school-re-entry-2020-21-school-year.aspx>

Make a Joyful Noise to the Lord

“Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations” (Psalm 100).

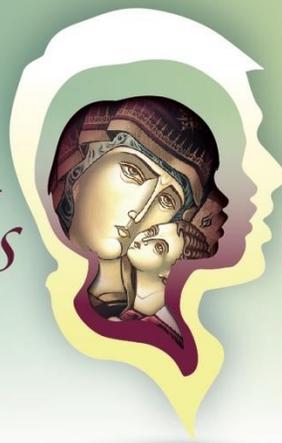
Given our unique circumstances in the past eight months, and the many challenges and difficulties that so many have faced, we might think that as Thanksgiving approaches, we have very little for which to be thankful. But scripture and particularly Psalm 100 tell us a completely different story. In fact, the passage invites us to praise the Lord with great joy; to celebrate and worship the God of love.

The major theme that emerges from this Psalm is the importance of belonging to God. During the past year there may have been times when we felt abandoned or forgotten by God. But the psalm presents the entire earth as joined together, not separated and alone. God’s steadfast love endures forever. And in the same way that we sing a song of praise to our creator, we acknowledge, praise, and bless Him for his goodness and mercy. Indeed, the Lord is good and he never abandons us; God is always ready to sustain us with his merciful love, even and especially during times of great doubt and fear. “Be not be afraid. I go before you always. Come follow me, and I will give you rest” (John Michael Talbot).

During this Thanksgiving weekend, let us remember that God is with us, in the good times and in the moments that we find ourselves struggling. “Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Psalm 100). Like God, we too are called to be “good shepherds” in the environments where we live: in our families, at work, and in the community, sharing the Gospel message of love with everyone we meet.

Sandra Talarico
Manager, Religious Education Services
Edmonton Catholic Schools

God Calls Us



EACH BY NAME

October 2020

“Joy springs from a grateful heart. Truly, we have received much, so many graces, so many blessings, and we rejoice in this. It will do us good to think back on our lives with the grace of remembrance...Let us seek the grace of remembrance so as to grow in the spirit of gratitude. Let us ask ourselves: are we good at counting our blessings, or have we forgotten them?” (Pope Francis, Homily, 09/24/15)

Our Holy Father shared these words initially when he was preaching to a group of priests and religious in New York. The message, however, is one that transcends vocation and age and whispers into all of our hearts. It is so easy to lose our sense of gratitude and joy when we are being inundated with messages of fear, anxiety, and negativity at every turn, every day. This year, more than ever, as we approach Thanksgiving, it is so important for us to take time to discern and to remember all of the goodness in our lives. There are blessings in each of our lives, and it is important that we never lose sight of them. Counting our blessings with gratitude is the first step of our journey to joy.

The beginning of September seems so long ago. There is no question that we are all learning as we move along the educational journey in Covid times. Families and schools have all been focused on making learning “work” in an environment that is drastically different than the norm, all while trying to minimize anxiety for everyone.

At the time of writing this article, our Division has an enrolment of 43,350 students with approximately 11,513 of those students participating online. Part of the understanding that we have gained as a Division is that we need proper time to be able to plan for and staff our different learning scenarios. As a Division, we have hired 96 teachers to support the learning choices that families made; thankfully, much of the cost of this is offset by the federal education pandemic funding that was announced in September. We are very proud of the way our schools and departments were able to reconfigure in the few precious days between August 28, when parents finalized their Quarter 1 learning decisions, and the first student day on September 2. In many cases, entire school timetables needed to be rebuilt and teaching assignments were changed.

October sees Quarter 2 on the horizon, and this means families will have another opportunity to choose in-school or online learning. You will receive a SWIFT K-12 message by October 5 with all of the information that you will need in order to make an informed decision for your children for the second quarter and beyond. We need to have a firm commitment from our families well before the second quarter begins on November 10 so that we can arrange our staff appropriately.

I will leave you with a thought from Pope Francis' General Audience on September 2, 2020. "The current pandemic has highlighted our interdependence: we are all linked to each other, for better or for worse. Therefore, to come out of this crisis better than before, we have to do so together; together, not alone... Either it is done together, or it is not done. We must do it together, all of us, in solidarity."

Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

Robert Martin
Chief Superintendent