



NEWS RELEASE

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Messages of mercy and hope inspire Catholic educators

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools' nearly 2,000 staff gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Family to celebrate the new school year the day before they welcome students back into classrooms.

The annual gathering began with Mass that included readings and prayers in different languages (English, French, Ukrainian, Cree and new Aramaic), reflecting the diversity of staff and students in the division.

Board of Education Chair Diane Boyko spoke of the hope she sees in the staff, students, for the division and for Catholic education in Saskatchewan. "I really want our staff to remember how fortunate we are, to see the good work they do day in and day out," Boyko said. "I think staff feel a bit of anxiety. We ended last school year with budget cuts, and over the summer we have been hearing about 'transformational change' to education. It's important to keep our focus on what's important—our students, the good work we are doing, and being men and women of faith."

Director of Education Greg Chatlain reminded staff of their roles as leaders. He said, "What you do matters. What you do to contribute to the Catholic education of each and every child that chooses to be with us makes a significant difference in their lives. It matters both in the short term and the long term. It matters to each child, to each family, to each co-worker and to the Good Lord himself."

Mike Patin, an author, speaker and "faith horticulturist" gave an inspirational and challenging keynote address. He referred to teaching in a Catholic school division as a calling, stating that educators see their vocation "through a slightly different lens—the lens of faith." Mixing humour with his southern Louisiana charm, Patin got staff to compile their own list of reasons to not teach or work in a school division. He then emphasized that the reasons to become an educator far outweigh them all. "Everyone in a classroom has a story to tell and is worth a million dollars to someone," Patin said. "In a class of 30 that's \$30 million! We are all called to do what we do in a spirit of mercy."

The first day of school at all Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools is Thursday, September 1.

With 44 schools and over 17,000 students, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools is Saskatchewan's largest Catholic school division, providing Catholic education from pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 in Saskatoon and area, Biggar, Humboldt, Martensville and Warman. We are rooted in faith, growing in knowledge and reaching out to transform the world.

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