

CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF SASKATCHEWAN



May 20, 2025

Catholic Education Week May 25-31, 2025

In joy and thanksgiving, we, the Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan, invite you to join us in recognizing the gift and the impact of Catholic education as we mark World Catholic Education Day on May 29, 2025, and celebrate Catholic Education Week in our province from May 25 to May 31.

This year's theme, *Pilgrims of Hope*, is taken from the Jubilee Year of Hope that we are observing in 2025. It invites us to celebrate how Catholic Education is at service of hope in so many ways. As the recently deceased Pope Francis has stated, hope is a gift from God and a task for all Christians. It is a "...light in the night" as the world struggles with seeking truth, understanding, mutual respect, and true peace.

Five key themes will be explored in our schools this week to help us to understand how we can be pilgrims of hope through Catholic education.

On Monday, May 26, we celebrate the theme *Honouring Human Dignity*. Catholic schools teach and celebrate the value that each human person is precious to God and has inherent dignity. Many biblical passages affirm this. In John's Gospel, for example, Jesus teaches: "*Love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life... I give you these commands so that you may love one another.*" (see John 15:12; 17)

On Tuesday, May 27, we reflect on *Caring for Creation*. Pope Francis often challenged the world about the urgent need to care for and steward God's gift of creation. His words are a reminder to Catholic educators that "... *protecting creation is not only an ethical issue, but one that is eminently theological, for it is the point where the mystery of humanity and the mystery of God intersect.*"¹ The Indigenous peoples of this land likewise teach that God, our Creator, establishes us in relationship with other peoples, but also with all creation. We are inspired by Pope Francis's call to honour this relationship: "*May the relationship between man and nature not be driven by greed, to manipulate and exploit, but may the divine harmony between beings and creation be conserved in the logic of respect and care.*"²

On Wednesday, May 28, we explore *Responding to the Poverties in Our World*. The ministry of Jesus Christ emphasizes the reality of poverty in our world, and the

¹ See Pope Francis: "Care for creation is an ethical and theological issue" June 27, 2024.

² Pope Francis, General Audience, April 22, 2015.

importance of compassion, care, and support towards those in need. Jesus' teachings and actions highlight the Kingdom of God as a place where all will be blessed – especially the poor: “*Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.*” (see Luke 6:20). Encouraging reflection on the church's social doctrine, Pope Leo XIV recently emphasized, “Give voice to the poor, ... (as we) participate actively and creatively – together with the People of God, in this time of great social upheaval, through attentive listening and open dialogue to all.”³

On Thursday, May 29, we look at *Serving in Solidarity*. Pope Francis frequently emphasized the importance of living in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, and particularly with the poor and marginalized. Solidarity is more than merely individual acts of kindness, but is a way of thinking and living that prioritizes the needs of the community over individual desires. Solidarity is a matter of charity that seeks compassion and justice. It often requires a shift in our own perspective.⁴

Finally, on Friday, May 30, we reflect on *Living as Peacemakers*. Pope Leo XIV reminds us that *peace* is not something passive, the mere absence of hostility and conflict, leaving tensions between peoples unaddressed. Rather, “peace is first and foremost an active and demanding gift. It engages and challenges each of us, regardless of our cultural background or religious affiliation, demanding, first of all, that we work on ourselves ... [to] eliminate pride and vindictiveness.” Peace seeks “the purification of the heart necessary for building peaceful relationships.... Working for peace requires acting justly.”⁵

As we celebrate this year's theme, Pilgrims of Hope, we emphasize that for people of faith, the virtue of hope is likewise not a passive issue. To be *pilgrims of hope* is to seek, encourage and foster a virtue that calls forth a vision and response – by Catholic educators, by members of the Church, by families, the larger community – that trusts in the redemption of all in our Lord Jesus Christ. The journey of Jesus Christ– through His life and ministry of teaching and service, through His passion and death on the cross, and through His resurrection to new life, which overcomes any obstacle between God and His people – provides the pattern for hope for Catholic education and formation.

In this sense, Catholic education seeks excellence: an excellence which involves developing and bringing to bear all young people's gifts and abilities. As our students grow as disciples of the Lord, they are inspired and equipped to humbly serve God's plan to make the world a better place and seek our ultimate destiny.

We join together in giving thanks to God for the gift of Catholic education and its unique contribution in our province and our communities. We pray in thanksgiving for the continuing existence and protection of publicly-funded Catholic education in Saskatchewan, and for hope and perseverance for educators, students and families.

³ Pope Leo to Centesimus Annus Foundation: May 15-17, 2025.

⁴ See: Message of Pope Francis re: “Globalize solidarity and not indifference,” March 4, 2023; Message of Pope Francis for World Day of the Poor” We must uphold values of responsibility, solidarity.” June 14, 2022.

⁵ See Address to the Diplomatic Corps of the Holy See, Friday May 16, 2025.

May Catholic education continue to model Christ: "... the Way, the Truth and the Life." (John 14:16) May it help all to develop the head and the heart so that we may "prepare [our] minds for action; discipline [ourselves]; set all [our] hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring to [us] when he is revealed." (see 1 Peter 1:13)

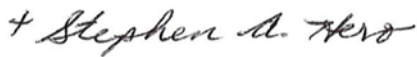
Sincerely Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Bolen".

Most Rev. Donald Bolen
Archbishop of Regina

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Hagemoen".

Most Rev. Mark Hagemoen
Bishop of Saskatoon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen A. Hero".

Most Rev. Stephen A. Hero
Bishop of Prince Albert

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Smolinski, C.Ss.R.". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Most Rev. Michael Smolinski, CSsR
Bishop of the Eparchy of Saskatoon