

Alberta Bishops: Catholic schools are a sign of hope

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are the future! We are the light!

The world that we live in is one filled with many messages. Often we are inundated with messages that are rooted in a spiritual absence or darkness, messages that deny or lack a faith element. However, even within these messages there is other news that fills us with hope, stories that capture the light of faith and shine it into all the corners of our life.

In his message for the 26th World Youth Day, Pope Benedict XVI said: "We are a people 'Planted and built up in Jesus Christ, firm in the faith.'"

We have a sacred or graced history and continually re-weave and renew our identity in the face of ever-changing circumstances, conditions and challenges, confident that there is a future for God's people.

We can think of the relationship between the future and our faith like the relationship between a lighthouse and an ocean. The ocean, like the future, presents uncertainties but it also presents opportunity, while the lighthouse stands on the shore shining like a guiding light.

This is how our faith works; it gives us the will and the desire to embrace the opportunity of the future despite any uncertainty and it guides us with its light. Because of the hope that the future holds, we must not shy away from it but rather embrace it wholeheartedly and celebrate the opportunities that it presents for us as Catholics.

One of these opportunities occurs in our Catholic schools.

From the youngest of students and onward, the youth of today fill our Catholic schools with a vibrant energy that compels us to move forward and embrace the future. We watch them grow in faith, through a strong foundation that has been modeled to them at school, home and Church and we are excited by their journey. It is this joy that propels us to embrace the future with hope and faith.

Let us celebrate Catholic schools with a renewed energetic spirituality and vibrant faith that mirrors the energy and enthusiasm that we see in our students. Let us hold them up as lights in the world, as we throw open the doors to the future and stand ready to journey in its light.

Bishop's address message to students

Dear Students,

Some of you may be familiar with the old song, This Little Light of Mine. Many of you may have sung it in Sunday school or at summer camp or even in the school choir. Some of the younger ones of you may be learning it now.

The words in this song say, "This little light of mine; I'm gonna let it shine" and they provide a good metaphor for our lives as Catholics.

The world is filled with messages for all of us. Some of these messages are messages that fill our spirit and fuel our faith, while others of these messages are ones that are darker and do not help our faith lives.

As Catholics, it is our responsibility to be on guard for these messages. We want to live a life of hope in the promises of Christ and, therefore, we must be aware of the messages to which we open ourselves up.

Like the song says, we all have a light inside of us. For Catholics, this light is the light of Christ, a light that is made stronger by our faith and the messages of God. As Catholic youth, you hold such a vibrant light that burns brightly in the energy of your faith. It is this brilliant light that you must hold out for all to see.

As we enter into the future, you are a beacon of light for the Church. You are a hope, and the faith community draws strength from your enthusiasm and devotion to live a life of faith. Embrace the future and let your light shine into the world and illuminate all darkness in love and faith.



Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton



Most Reverend Frederick B. Henry
Bishop of Calgary



Most Reverend Gérard Pettipas, CSSR
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan



Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton



Most Reverend Murray Chatlain
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith



Most Reverend Luc Bouchard
Bishop of Saint-Paul