

Bishops offer reflection on COVID and the call to Christian renewal

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a big impact on all us, but what's been the effect on us as a Catholic community?

The bishops of Alberta and the Northwest Territories released a pastoral statement, called [On the Impact of COVID-19 & the Call to Christian Renewal](#) and Grandin Media has embarked on an ambitious project to explore its themes.

This letter – addressed to all the Catholic faithful – offers praise and thanks for the many examples of care and collaboration that have emerged during the pandemic; it also highlights some of the social challenges that have surfaced and that will need to be addressed going forward.

In particular, the bishops are inviting Catholics to review the impact of COVID-19 within their homes, schools, workplaces, and society in general, in light of the gospel and the social teaching of the Church, through reflections on seven topics. Which values, attitudes and behaviours will we want to hold on to going forward? Which may be in need of remedy or renewal?

Through a process of reflection and discernment, the bishops are using this time as an opportunity to inspire and lead a renewal of Christian life in the Church that will impact society in positive ways.

Over the next seven weeks, Grandin Media will be hosting seven panel discussions on the reflection themes referenced in the letter: the inherent dignity of human life, the importance of the family, individual rights and responsibilities, vulnerability and solidarity, responsibility for the common good, healthy use of information technologies, and the value and dignity of human work.

The first panel discussion will be posted on Sept. 21 and each subsequent Monday:

PANEL #1: [INHERENT DIGNITY OF EVERY HUMAN LIFE](#)

Moderator: Dr. Bonnie Annicchiarico (Director, Grateful Advocates for Catholic Education (GrACE))

Panelists:

- Patrick Dumelie (CEO, Covenant Health, Edmonton)

- Dr. Troy Davies (CEO, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton)
- David & Cathy Ann Bouchard (Magdalene House, Red Deer)
- Sr. Alinda (Mother Superior, Missionaries of Charity, St. Paul, AB)

The goal is for all of us to gain insights into living our faith at home and at work, and in our parishes and communities.

The Bishops encourage feedback, comments and reflections by viewers of this Grandin Media discussion series. We welcome your feedback at covid19@grandinmedia.ca, which will be forwarded to the bishops.



The graphic features the text "COVID & THE Call to Faith Week 2" in the top left. Below it, the title "Importance of the Family" is displayed in a large, bold font. To the right of the title are five circular portraits of the panelists: Ms. Fran Lucas, Deacon Gerald & Marian Logan, Greg & Teresita Parillas, Theresa & Jordan Robinson, and Sr. Lucinda Patterson, SA. The word "Panelists" is written in a cursive font above the portraits. At the bottom right of the graphic, the text "PANEL #2: [IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY](#) (VIDEO TO BE RELEASED SEPT. 28)" is shown, with "IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY" underlined and in blue.

Moderator: Fran Lucas (National President-Elect, CWL-Canada)

Panelists:

- Deacon Gerald & Marian Logan (Office of Life and Family, Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan)
 - Greg & Teresita Parillas (Couples for Christ)
 - Theresa & Jordan Robinson (St. Vital Parish, Beaumont, AB)
 - Sr. Lucinda Patterson, SA (Chair, Board of Directors, Lurana Shelter, Edmonton)
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PANEL #3: [INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES](#) (VIDEO TO BE RELEASED OCT. 5)

Moderator: Matthew Bodnarek (Grandin Media)

Panelists:

- Dr. Ryan Topping (Academic Dean, Newman Theological College, Edmonton)
- Hon. Kevin Feehan (Court of Appeals Judge–Alberta/NWT/Nunavut)
- Dr. Timothy Harvie (Associate Professor, St. Mary’s University, Calgary)
- Jo-Anne Paquette (Marian Centre, Edmonton)



PANEL #4: [VULNERABILITY AND SOLIDARITY](#) (VIDEO TO BE RELEASED OCT. 12)

Moderator: Eoin Murray (Director of Development & Community Relations, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton)

Panelists:



- Jo Ann Molloy (VP, Resident Experience, Covenant Care/Covenant Living, Edmonton)
- Suzette Montreuil (Executive Director, NWT Seniors’ Society/ Diocese of Mackenzie Fort Smith)
- Rev. Eamonn Mc Nerney (Chaplain, University of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton)
- Ms. Cathie Langmead (Chair, Fort McMurray Catholic Board of Education)
- Dr. Lance Dixon (Director of Campus Ministry, St. Mary’s University, Calgary)



✿ **PANEL #5: [RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMON GOOD](#)** (VIDEO TO BE RELEASED OCT. 19)

Moderator: Dr. Shawn Flynn (President (interim) – St. Joseph’s College, Edmonton)

Panelists:

- Dr. Peter Baltutis (Associate Professor/CWL Chair for Catholic Studies, St. Mary’s University, Calgary)
- Martina Norwegian (Sacred Heart Parish, Fort Simpson, NWT)
- Gerald Sseguya (Coordinator, Faith and Community Liaison, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton)
- Rev. Kris Schmidt (Pastor/Vlogger/“Flying Father”, Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Fort Saskatchewan, AB)



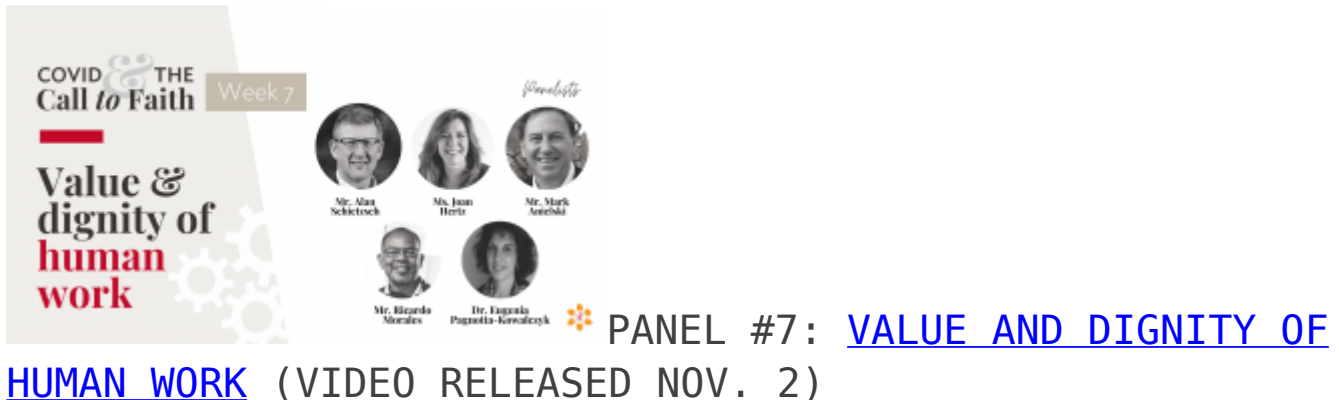
✿ **PANEL #6: [HEALTHY USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES](#)** (VIDEO TO BE RELEASED OCT. 26)

Moderator: Lincoln Ho (Grandin Media)

Panelists:

- Tim Spelliscy (Consultant, Media and Community Relations)
- Rev. Feroz Fernandes, (Author/Blogger/Pastor, Holy Family Parish-Grimshaw, AB)
- Ms. Chelsea Marshall (Religious Education Consultant, Calgary Catholic Schools)

- Constable Tuyen Nguyen (Cyber Crimes Investigations Unit, Edmonton Police Service)

The graphic features a light grey background with a white gear pattern. On the left, the text reads "COVID & THE Call to Faith Week 7" in a sans-serif font, with "Call to Faith" in a larger, bold font. Below this is the title "Value & dignity of human work" in a mix of bold and regular fonts, with "human work" in red. To the right, there are five circular headshots of the panelists, arranged in two rows. The top row has three headshots, and the bottom row has two. Below each headshot is the name of the person. The word "Panelists" is written in a cursive font above the top row of headshots. To the right of the headshots is a small orange gear icon followed by the text "PANEL #7: VALUE AND DIGNITY OF HUMAN WORK (VIDEO RELEASED NOV. 2)".

COVID & THE Call to Faith Week 7

Value & dignity of human work

Panelists

Mr. Alan Schietzsch

Ms. Joan Hertz

Mr. Mark Anielski

Mr. Ricardo Morales

Dr. Eugenia Pagnotta-Kowalczyk

✦ PANEL #7: [VALUE AND DIGNITY OF HUMAN WORK](#) (VIDEO RELEASED NOV. 2)

Moderator: Alan Schietzsch (Grandin Media)

Panelists:

- Joan Hertz (Lawyer/Consultant; Chair, ATB Financial Board of Directors)
- Mark Anielski (President and Chief Well-being Officer of Anielski Management Inc.)
- Ricardo Morales (Manager of Community Development and Integration Services, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society)
- Dr. Eugenia Pagnotta-Kowalczyk (Executive Director, Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association)

These panelists, assembled from across the province and territory, include top experts in their fields in health care, education, social services, law and ministry and business.

Among them are Patrick Dumelie and Troy Davies, the CEOs of Covenant Health and Catholic Social Services respectively, national Catholic Women's League president-elect Fran Lucas, and Sr. Lucinda Patterson, chair of the Lurana women's shelter in Edmonton.

The goal is for all of us to gain insights into living our faith at home and at work, and in our parishes and communities. At the invitation of the Bishops, an online feedback mechanism will be available to encourage comments and reflections by viewers of the Grandin Media discussion series. We welcome your feedback. Email us at covid19@grandinmedia.ca.

"Our Catholic faith has much to contribute with respect to promoting human, social and spiritual values for the common good of society," the bishops note in their letter.

“We trust that you, like us, see the urgency to discern wisely the signs of the times and to “reset” our lives so that our collective experience in moving forward accords with the Gospel.”

Download the Pastoral Letter:

- [A Pastoral Statement on the Impact of COVID-19 and the Call to Christian Renewal](#) (EN-PDF)
- [Déclaration pastorale sur l’impact de la COVID-19 et appel au renouveau](#) (FR- PDF)

[Catholic community helps map out COVID-19 present and future](#)