

[Rotheiser: Public media, public faith](#)

When I was young, public expressions of faith were limited to Mass on Sundays, Christmas and Easter, and with fellow students in the school gym. It was short and not that sweet. In fact, it was very unsatisfying.

Little did I know then, decades later, that I would be part of a team reflecting the infinite and diverse ways Catholics express their faith and to encourage others to do so in their way.

For us, Grandin Media is an expression of our Catholic faith and we do so unapologetically.

We do this the face of a society which increasingly wants to scrub away faith – from the outdoor Nativity scene at City Hall to the simple act of saying “Merry Christmas”.

We’ve reflected how Catholics express their faith in the Dene language and culture in [Fort Simpson, N.W.T.](#) despite the legacy of residential schools. It’s also expressed in the beauty of [Ukrainian icons and art](#) currently on display at the University of Alberta’s downtown Enterprise Square location, in Christmas carols sung inside St. Joseph’s Basilica and in the very personal relationships between family members of the late Margie Harper during her [last few days of palliative care](#).

If you’ve missed any of these stories, enjoy them on the [GrandinMedia.ca](#) site.

So how are we doing? You may have seen our social media specialist Lincoln Ho at your parish or event. In addition to that, he keeps tabs on how Grandin Media competes in the vast landscape of social media.

Our subscribers have increased across the board, from [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), Instagram and [Youtube](#). The biggest increases have been in our followers on Facebook, at 165, and Twitter at 786. That may seem small, but consider that we launched just a few short weeks ago!

Beyond the numbers, our stories are having an impact by reflecting faith inside and outside the church.

One of the biggest stories so far was [the decision by the City of Edmonton to replace the outdoor Nativity scene at City Hall](#), a particularly controversial one just weeks before Christmas.

A tradition that goes back decades, the Nativity scene featured life-sized, fibreglass figures and even live animals. Instead, it has been replaced with a much smaller art display tucked inside the building.

City administrators said an outdoor Nativity was unfeasible because of construction over the next two years, but they also admit that it may not come back regardless. Furthermore, the decision was made unilaterally and many faith leaders – not just Catholics – are upset.

The city chaplain, Rev. John Dowds, says there was some question about the appropriateness of a Christian display in a pluralistic society and the city wanted to be as inclusive as possible.

However, it seems contradictory to take an outdoor public display of faith, shrink it, and bring inside permanently from the public square.

Meanwhile, just a few blocks away at the provincial legislature, other faiths are celebrated in a very public way.

We also know that other public expressions of faith – even if it's a simple as sending your child to a Catholic school – are not without controversy.

Grandin Media was among the first media to report Education Minister David Eggen's full and vocal support for Catholic education, at an annual meeting of the Alberta Catholic School Trustees Association, even in the face of controversy over the province's human sexuality education curriculum.

It was also a reminder that Grandin Media is competing, and succeeding, alongside our secular counterparts while reflecting the Catholic perspective. Our long-term goal includes Alberta press gallery credentials.

So what are we working on now?

Grandin Media, in particular our videographer Matthew Bodnarek, is in the process of filming a Scripture Series taking viewers through the Bible, even those who have never picked up a copy.

We're starting with a very basic but important question: What is the Bible? Guiding us through will be Rev. John Kohler, an instructor at St. Joseph Seminary, and Stephane Saulnier, a professor of Sacred Scripture at Newman Theological College. Watch for the first instalments to be shared on Grandin Media and its social media feeds in the new year.

In the meantime, check out Matthew's 'Know Scripture' YouTube series at youtube.com/watch?v=rpGdqgzY6ZM. He's chosen of Psalm 139, which will be of particular significance to expectant parents.

If you take a closer look, you may recognize the family of Thandiwe Konguavi, our reporter, who is currently on maternity leave. We wish her the very best as they expect their second daughter.

The video is also a reminder that, as we celebrate the birth of Christ, that public expressions of faith should not be limited to the Christmas and Easter.

Do you have an idea for a story?

Is there an event you think we would be interested in?

Do you have a comment on anything you've seen and heard on Grandin Media?

With your help, we can reflect the infinite and unique ways that our faith can be expressed.

In the meantime, the staff at Grandin Media wish you a blessed Christmas. We're excited about the new ventures coming up next year and we can't wait to share them with you.