



The Catholic Bishops
of Alberta and the
Northwest Territories

Les Evêques Catholiques
de l'Alberta et les
Territoires du Nord-Ouest

**Catholic Education Sunday
November 6, 2011**

Open Wide the Doors

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Open wide the doors to Christ!

In the Book of Revelation we read, "Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me."
(Revelation 3:20)

When Pope John Paul II began his pontificate some of the first words he spoke were: "Do not be afraid. Open, I say open wide the doors for Christ." His words have been echoed by Pope Benedict XVI. These words are an invitation to believers not to be afraid to allow the light and love of Christ to touch and transform our lives. As Catholics, we actively seek this light. We open the door to the Lord and know that He will come and sit with us and guide us. Let us be sure to open this door in our Catholic schools.

Our beloved students need our schools to be bright with the light of Christ. We open the door to the Lord when the students follow a curriculum and activities fully permeated with the beauty of our faith; when teachers are authentic witnesses of the Christian life; when staff and administration strive diligently to ensure that our schools form a Gospel culture; and when trustees are guided by the teachings of the Lord and His Church and reflect their faith in the political arena. Schools that consciously open their doors to Christ are a priceless treasure. We must continue to support the valuable and vital role that our Catholic schools play in our Church and in our broader communities.

Let this Catholic Education Sunday be a call to ensure that we are continuing to open wide the doors to Christ in our schools. We will face challenges, but we must not cower in the face of them. Rather we must remain steadfast in our relationship with Christ and His Church. With Christ as our teacher, we will learn and grow in a living tradition of faith and wisdom. Opening wide our doors to Him, we shall be transformed into authentic witnesses of His love.

Therefore, do not be afraid. Let us move forward and open wide the doors of our hearts and our schools to Christ.



A Special Message to Students on Catholic Education Sunday

When Jesus calls us to open wide the doors, he is asking us to open the doors of our hearts to him.

Sometimes it is uncomfortable or scary to open the door to the unknown. But Jesus is not a stranger or an unknown in our lives. We were baptized into his family and are growing up in his Church.

When we open the doors of our heart to Jesus, we are inviting him into our lives and we are making a commitment to journey with him. Let us not be afraid of this.

Your Catholic school and your teachers are all part of the world that has opened its heart to Christ. Use these people as your role models in faith. See the possibilities that life holds in store for you when you chose to live in Christ's light.

If we embrace his light with our whole being, we will then also become role models, evangelizers, for those who have yet to open wide their hearts. So go forth, and as Pope John Paul II told the Church: "Do not be afraid. Open, I say open wide the doors for Christ."

Most Reverend Richard W. Smith
Archbishop of Edmonton

Most Reverend Gerard Pettipas CSsR
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan

Most Reverend Murray Chatlain
Bishop of Mackenzie-Fort Smith

Most Reverend Frederick Henry
Bishop of Calgary

Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton

Most Reverend Luc Bouchard
Bishop of St. Paul