



December, 2009

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see - I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2: 10-11)

During this Advent season we, as the Edmonton Catholic Schools' family, prepare to celebrate the great feast of Christmas. God became man in the form of a baby, born in the humble surroundings of a stable in Bethlehem, witnessed by shepherds and angels, and later adored by kings from the East. May this time of waiting and preparation be a time when our students embrace the many faith-filled activities presented to them in our schools. As individuals, classmates, staff and families, it is a time to reflect upon the many blessings that we have been given and to extend a caring gesture, a friendly smile to those who may need a 'ray of hope' to enter their lives. May the coming of Christ and His presence among us give us reason to live in hope, and to become 'transformers' in our secular world.

Since the beginning of this school year, Edmonton Catholic School District has been faced with many challenges, with two of the most significant being the H1N1 influenza outbreak which has affected many of our staff and students and their families, and the decrease in the Alberta Government's funding for our schools. Our 2009-2010 budget was approved at the November 17th Public Board meeting and is posted on our web site www.ecsd.net

In an excerpt from *Seek That Which Is Above*, Pope Benedict XVI tells us that:

"Advent is concerned with that very connection between memory and hope which is so necessary to man. Advent's intention is to awaken the most profound and basic emotional memory within us, namely, the memory of the God who became a child. This is a healing memory; it brings hope. The purpose of the Church's year is continually to rehearse her great history of memories, to awaken the heart's memory so that it can discern the star of hope...It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."

An important new initiative for all our district's students (Kindergarten to Grade 12) is the delivery of Wellness Education, a joint initiative of both the Education and Health and Wellness departments of the Government of Alberta. The vision of Wellness Education is "for students to be educated, informed and contributing members of society and to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be well in every sense of the word- emotionally, intellectually, physically socially and spiritually."

To that end, our schools' environments, policies, partnerships, services and support as well as the delivery of the program of studies in health and physical education will reflect this new emphasis.

May this Advent season be a time for bringing hope, transformation and fulfillment in our lives, and allow each of us time to reconnect with the true spirit of Christmas.

God bless each of you and your families through this Holy season!

Sincerely,

Joan Carr
Superintendent