



# St. Michael's Academy

## Saskatchewan

*In the distance we hear a house door close, a car motor start and the crunch of the snow under the feet of children. What is their destination? It is in the small village (approximately 150 people) of Welwyn, Saskatchewan. It is a little prairie school of the Society of St. Pius X: St. Michael's Academy.*

Mrs. Connie Green - Teacher

### **Introduction to Our School**

The talk of a Traditional Catholic School in Welwyn began in about the year 2002. Three families of the little congregation of twenty that made up Our Lady of Fatima's congregation decided that they would try to establish a school to make their parish have as much a "normal" par-

ish life as possible in these troubled times. The idea seemed a natural progression in imitation of the actions of the early Catholic missionaries who started schools almost as soon as their mission churches had been built.

The parents who were interested in starting a school began attending weekly meetings to

## Importance of a Catholic Education

*Saint Michael's Academy is a very important school to many other children of our parish and to me. It helps to form young adults that are strong in the faith and are intelligent enough to defend that faith.*

*For me, a grade 11 student, Saint Michael's Academy has helped me and continues to help me in many, many ways. First of all it does what most people would expect it to do, that is, it gives me a good Catholic education. Now what this education includes is more than what most people realize. First of all, it trains students in the Catholic Faith. This is the most obvious part. There is, however, a major part of the training that most people don't think about. I am referring to the habits and virtues that the students are taught to practice, which will help them to reach their final goal, Heaven.*

*St Michael's Academy has also given me something that home schooling alone could not give me, the experience of being in a classroom setting. It teaches students how to get along with others and it also gives the opportunities to practice patience and other virtues that are needed in the world today.*

*Most people cannot be home schooled. This means that there is a good chance that the children will be sent to a public school where they can lose the Faith. If these families had a Catholic school that they could send their children to, there would be a better chance for them to keep the Catholic Faith and be saved.*

*Thus you can see why it is important that our school, a Catholic school, should continue.  
(Patrick Van Den Bussche - grade 11)*

discern the hundreds of tasks that needed to be done. The list seemed daunting and endless: contacting government and health agencies about regulations for independent schools, making arrangements for the renting of the basement of the Church from the Society, finding or making desks, room dividers and chalkboards, deciding on curriculum (Our Lady of Victory's was chosen with Canadian content added), timetables, rules of the handbooks for teachers and students, and the hiring of teachers, to name just a few. Eventually, after a few other families moved here to join this daring endeavor, an elected school board was set up to deal with the administration of the school.

There has been many firsts for the school. The first day of school, September 6, 2005, with 23 children ranging from grades Kindergarten to Seven. The first Mass offered by Father Rusak for the student body. The report cards handed out by Father Girouard on the last day of the school year. The first field trip we did to the Motherwell Homestead National Historic Site. The first time some of the grade nine students won sixth place in the math competition in the name of St. Michael's Academy at the University of Regina. The first Music Festival award brought back home to our school. The visit of the First Assistant to

General Superior Bishop Fellay, Father Niklaus Pfluger, and the Superior of the Society for Canada, Father Rostand who approved the funding of our own first school building in 2007. Finally we are hoping to have our first graduating class in 2011.

In the spring of 2009 the Society of St. Pius X took St. Michael's Academy officially under its auspices, the elected school board was dissolved and Father Rusak our pastor out of Winnipeg, Manitoba became our headmaster.

God had been very good to us. This is our fifth year of operation. We have fifteen students attending this year ranging from grades Kindergarten to Grade 11 and three teachers and we have a wonderful principal. The students in grades ten to twelve are in our distance education program of Our Lady of Victory, an accredited American school, and receive their transcripts and diplomas from there.

St. Michael's Academy is an independent school. As such it receives no funding from the government and is run solely on tuition, fundraising and donations. The cleaning of the school is done by the teachers and the students. We have held annual skate-a-thons and bottle drives, sold

## An International Opinion

*St. Michael's Academy may not be a large and widely known school, but it is definitely a very special school. I come from a very large Traditional Catholic school in the United States and my class had about thirty girls in it. I was really struggling with my grades and trying to keep up with the rest of my class. My parents then decided to send me to Canada to attend St. Michael's Academy, a small Catholic school in Saskatchewan. I was very nervous about it. The small classes would be so different, and the number of students much, much smaller.*

*The first couple months it took time to get used to the new atmosphere. The teachers at St. Michael's Academy are wonderful. They understand the students and it is easy to see they have received from God the gift of teaching. The students were very kind in taking a new classmate into the school. At St. Michael's Academy I learned to develop good study habits and to persevere for success. Here I have achieved the highest grades I've ever had.*

*(Rebecca Koskinen - grade 9)*

## Courage

*...Before our Welwyn school started, I would mostly stay at home and hardly got to know anyone. I would always be the shy guy in the corner. Today I am still a very shy person but I am able to handle myself better in a social activity. It not only helped me with this, but also my twin brother.*

*...*

*St. Michael's Academy has also helped students who have been struggling in other schools. It can provide one-on-one training just like a homeschooled student gets, but with the experience of a classroom environment.*

*(Matthew Van Den Bussche - grade 11)*

chocolates, and done various other fundraising activities to try to keep our school going. Now we appeal to you. Please read these articles written by our Grade ten and eleven students to see the importance of your generosity.

### St. Michael's Academy and the Future

Shortly before the end of the day the students begin to clean their classrooms. There is only a hand bell to ring, but when the clock reaches 3:45 pm, the hand bell is rung to signal that the classes for that day have ended. Students will rise for the ending prayers of the day, the Canadian flag is lowered from the outside flagpole, and students



then begin to pack their backpacks with the notebooks and textbooks they will need for that day's homework. Students smile and wave to each other as they head for home after their day of learning at St. Michael's Academy.

For most students the small community of Welwyn, Saskatchewan is home. Although this part of Saskatchewan is traditionally agricultural, that dependence on agriculture has been slowly changing. Saskatchewan is currently experiencing unprecedented growth. The fastest growing sectors in the province are potash, uranium, and oil and gas. Major expansions at

## Why A Catholic Education Is Important To Me

You might ask "Why do you want to go to a Catholic school? Public schools are good enough." This is not true. At Catholic schools, virtues such as patience, perseverance, courage, obedience, and charity are practiced. I doubt if any of these virtues are practiced in a public school, at least not on a grand scale. Catholic schools prepare people so that they are good Catholics in the world when they must enter it. If you want to have good Catholics in this dark world of ours then I believe that we must make an effort to make sure that is what we get. In a Catholic school we are taught religion, a very important subject. Public schools do not teach this, I am afraid... Lastly, by being in a Catholic school, one gets to assist at Mass more often. Many priests have come to say Mass at our school. Numerous times the priests have stayed a few days longer so we could attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass another time.

This is why I want St. Michael's Academy to stay open. - (Monica Green - grade 10)

## Five Years Ago

... I was homeschooled with my five other siblings from kindergarten to Grade 6. During my homeschooling days, I had a fair amount of free time, which I really enjoyed. Then it happened, the parents of the parish began to meet about starting a school. So for my Grade 7 year, I was attending classes of St. Michael's Academy. The classroom setting, the routine and rules were all so new compared to home. The new situation was fun until the novelty wore off. From then on, there was always an underlying feeling of wanting to go back to what I had had before.

Once I became used to school life, my desires of homeschooling began to wither. As one of the more senior students, I have begun to realize what good the school has done for me. Here are some examples. At home my grades were only average because I didn't really feel I had to give my best. Being put in a classroom environment caused a slight competition with my classmates that caused my grades to rise dramatically. In a classroom, there are people that are not your own flesh and blood, people with their own ideas and desires. Consequently, you are forced to "rub shoulders" and you must learn to get along and give up your own will.

Most importantly, however, is the Catholic atmosphere that as a student you are surrounded in. The school body attends every Mass that is during school hours, begins with morning prayers and classes begin and end with a prayer.

As you can see our school is very important to us!  
(Daniel Green - grade 11)

numerous industrial facilities throughout the province has led to a major shortage of workers, especially skilled trades, for the construction work to complete these projects. There will also be the permanent jobs created at these same facilities. Welwyn and the surrounding communities are reaping the benefits of major industrial expansions in the area. The Rocanville potash mine, owned by PotashCorp of Saskatchewan, located 10 miles from Welwyn is currently doing a 2.8 billion dollar expansion. Mining/refining jobs are some of the best paying jobs in the area and PotashCorp plans to add another 270 permanent jobs. For every job created in mining it creates approximately 6 jobs in infrastructure in the surrounding communities.

### **Economic conditions**

The economic conditions for the area might be very promising but unfortunately the economic conditions for St. Michael's Academy are not quite as rosy. As an independent school operating in the province of Saskatchewan, St. Mi-

chael's Academy receives no funding from the province. This has the advantage that St. Michael's can insure that the curriculum is Catholic in its entirety. It has the disadvantage that the school must be operated on a minimal budget.

St. Michael's is in its fifth year of operation and with God's blessing has a bright future ahead. Like all schools, St. Michael's Academy cannot continue without the generosity of people who are committed to seeing that our youth receive a good Catholic education. We have come to the point where we must ask for outside help. You have read the articles written by the students. You have read a little bit about the history of this almost unknown school of the Society of St. Pius X. If you could in some way help St. Michael's Academy financially, it would be greatly appreciated.

### **Please send donations to;**

*St. Michael's Academy, Box 1  
Welwyn, SK, SOA 4L0*

## **Teacher Needed :**

*at St. Michael's Academy,  
for the school year 2010-2011.*

### **Location**

Welwyn is a mission parish which has Mass every two Sundays as well as on several weekdays of the year. There are about 80 parishioners and a chapel where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The parish is located in an isolated small village of less than 500 persons, the nearest other small town being about 10 miles away. The entire area is dedicated to farming and mining. This isolation may be considered a disadvantage for some, but it can have spiritual advantages.

### **About the school**

The school itself is expected to have about 15 students from K-12 for the year 2010-2011. We have two experienced teachers that are committed at present for next year but due to the number of grades to teach we need another teacher. It is not necessary that this person have previous teaching ex-

perience as the program of the school is well laid out and the guidance of the other teachers is readily available. The school has been running now for five years and has attained a good degree of stability. You may find more information and pictures of our school at [www.sspcx.ca/School/St\\_Michaels/](http://www.sspcx.ca/School/St_Michaels/).

### **Qualifications needed**

We have already had several young men and women who have helped with the school over the years and have gone on to other careers or states in life. Generally, we are looking for someone who has sound moral principles and is serious about the Catholic Faith. This person ought to have a love for children, and be capable intellectually of teaching and morally of docilely following a program of studies. We have a teacher's handbook which we can make available to you. You will find our general school handbook on the website mentioned.

### **What is provided?**

For the teacher who comes we would provide room and board as well as a small salary (which is negotiable). No Traditional Catholic comes to Welwyn for worldly reasons or wealth. However, this is a good place for some young person to discern their vocation and to give themselves with generosity to a Catholic school before finding the will of God for oneself. Likewise an older person who has still good health may want to give some of the latter years of his/her life in such an apostolate.

For more inquiries, please contact me, Father Rusak, the headmaster of St. Michael's Academy at:

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