CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

Office of Catholic Schools

200 North Glebe Road, Suite 503 • Arlington, VA 22203
Office (703) 841-2519 • Fax (703) 524-8670
catholicschools@arlingtondiocese.org

March 31, 2020

Dear Diocese of Arlington Catholic School Families,

We are in unprecedented times that became more unique on March 23rd when Governor Northam announced the closure of all in-person K-12 schooling, public and private, for the remainder of the school year because of the COVID-19 virus. Over the past few weeks, you have worked closely with our schools to transition your children to the eLearning model we are currently employing. While we made this transition in the hope that it would be possible to re-open by mid-April, the Governor's mandate made it clear that we will bring the year to a close without returning to the school buildings. For students in all grades, as well as for teachers and parents, this difficult news hits at practical, social and emotional levels and compels us to dig deeper spiritually as individuals and communities.

As the prospect of school closure began to loom on the horizon, our administrators, teachers, counselors and support teams elevated their collective effort in preparation for the use of the eLearning model that began to roll out during the week of March 16th. Since then, with your support, they have been ensuring continuity of learning with a focus on essential standards needed to advance to the next grade level. They have done this without losing sight of what makes our schools different and special - our opportunity to focus on the formation of students in the Catholic faith. With your help and that of our Pastors and Chaplains, this is being done very creatively across the Diocese.

We will continue with the eLearning model per the following guidance:

- We will continue to follow the existing 2019-2020 academic year calendar.
- Students will be learning new material and grades will be recorded to capture individual student progress
- Emphasis will be on learning essential concepts

- The following guidance applies:

  o We will follow the Easter break from Holy Thursday through Divine Mercy Sunday (April 10-19), and observe the Memorial Day holiday (May 25)

  o Schools may use up to five additional Teacher Professional Development days between now and the end of the year. These will be scheduled locally, and you will be informed by your school of the dates. These days can be used to provide space in the remainder of the calendar for reflection and refinement to the benefit of students.

  o We will not be administering the Spring Performance Series Testing or the Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education (ACRE) this year.

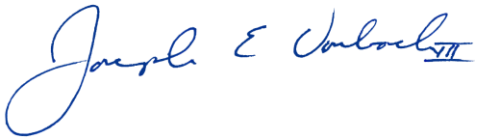
  o The closure of schools means all school related activities, sports, dances, ceremonies, and events are also canceled.

  o It is out hope that our schools will be able to hold graduation ceremonies when circumstances permit!

This challenging moment we are in has heightened our collective appreciation of the parent-teacher partnership in Catholic education. To be sure, the shift to eLearning has asked much of parents, students and teachers. I thank you for working with us as the adjustment to the new model has unfolded. Know that the Office of Catholic Schools and all involved in Catholic education in the Diocese are focused on supporting your children and maintaining the strong Catholic communities you have helped to form. We are committed to making the remaining days of the school year a time during which students feel supported and productive.

My prayers are with you and your families. Sincerely in Christ,

Sincerely in Christ ,



Joseph E. Vorbach III
Superintendent of Schools