



April 17, 2020

Dear Catholic School Family Members,

Happy Easter! We pray that you and your family are safe and well and that you enjoyed the spring break, in spite of these troubling and unusual circumstances. Today, Governor Larry Hogan announced the continued closure of Maryland's public schools through May 15, 2020. We write to inform you that all archdiocesan schools will follow suit, as distance learning will continue to replace in-classroom instruction through May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Our decision to follow the State's guidance for continued closure of school campuses was made solely with the health and safety of your child and all our school communities in mind. While disappointing and inconvenient, it is not entirely surprising, as health experts tell us that it may yet be weeks before Maryland sees a peak in the number of new COVID-19 infections and any gradual return to normalcy can't begin to occur until at least two weeks after that, according to federal guidelines.

On a positive note, we have many reports about tremendous progress being made with "distance learning" through digital technology and by all accounts, both students and instructors have begun to settle into the "new normal" of remote instruction. We would like to extend our gratitude to the students (and their parents) and to the teachers and administrators and their staffs for working so hard to enable our schools to pivot to distance learning so quickly and, in many cases, so seamlessly. We believe one outcome of this horrible health crisis is that our students will be far better prepared for the digital learning environment that is a hallmark of 21<sup>st</sup> century education when they return to their respective classrooms.

Please know that just as we continue to monitor the progress of our remote school system, we do so with an eye on the current and projected conditions caused by the pandemic. Thus, we will continue to process and plan for the impact of this virus on the current school year, which affects many aspects of both student life as well as overall school- and system-wide operations. Such planning will allow us to ensure that your child's instruction continues unfettered, regardless of where that instruction may need to occur.

That said, it is our hope to be able to reopen our school campuses before the end of the current school year. Please know that any decision we make about the reopening of our school buildings will be based on the guidance of experts in the field of health and on our overall priority: having a learning environment that is as safe and healthy as possible for your child and for our entire school community.

In the meantime, we pray for your continued health and safety and for that of your family. Be assured that we will do everything possible to make the remainder of this memorable school year as productive and formative as we possibly can. May the Risen Lord bless you and your family this Easter season and throughout the year.

Yours in Service to the Mission of Jesus,

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