



June 5, 2020

Dear Catholic school students, parents, and staff,

As this unforgettable school year draws to a close, I'd like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone for your faith, your work, and your support during this difficult time.

This year has been full of successes and many unprecedented challenges. I am amazed at the talents and efforts of our teachers, who pivoted on a dime and began the hard work of educating students remotely. I am similarly amazed at the efforts of students and families, who rose to the challenge and did their best to engage in remote learning to the best of their abilities.

With these challenges came opportunities - to spend more time together as families, to slow down the busy paces of life we are used to, and to rely on our faith and perseverance to get us all through this year together. As the saying goes, "Change is the only constant in life." We see this in many areas of our lives, but never before like we are seeing it now. One thing is certain, we will be prepared for almost anything after living through a challenging time like this.

My thoughts and prayers go with all of our 2020 graduates. They too will be prepared for almost anything. Their grit and resilience have made us all proud. We enjoyed virtually sharing in celebrations and recognitions in May, and look forward to safe commencement ceremonies in June and July to bring this chapter to a close.

School staff will be very busy during the month of June, writing and preparing "Return-to-Learn" plans for their schools. This planning is lengthy and thorough and includes sections on leadership, infrastructure, health and safety, academics, Catholic identity, etc. We are also waiting for re-opening guidance that will be coming from the Department of Education. Our number one priority will be the health and safety of our students, families, and staff this fall.

As we all know, the state of COVID-19 in our communities is ever-changing. It is impossible to predict now what our situations will look like in August. As a result, our schools are planning now for three different learning scenarios, depending on the state of the virus in their communities. These three plans will prepare schools for onsite learning (which we all hope and pray for), distance learning, and a hybrid version of the two options. If distance learning is needed due to virus activity, it will be required for all public and accredited nonpublic school students in the state. Our schools will be preparing for, and focusing on professional development for staff, and supports for students and families, should this need arise.

Look for future communication from your schools regarding re-opening procedures in the fall, and again, thank you for your support, and your faith in our schools this spring. We look forward to coming out stronger on the other side of this and continuing to work with all of you to meet the spiritual, emotional, and academic needs of our students and families.

God bless you and your family.

Patty Lansink