



OUR LADY OF SORROWS
PRE K-8 CATHOLIC SCHOOL

"Our Lady of Sorrows Elementary School provides an atmosphere rooted in the Catholic faith, dedicated to individual academic excellence while preparing life-long learners and responsible Christian adults."

April 24, 2020

Dear OLS Families,

Welcome back from spring break! It is my hope that you enjoyed your Easter and, although a very different year, you celebrated the joy of the risen Savior with your family. I pray that you are all safe and healthy, and that you are finding peace and rhythm to your days. It is hard to believe that we are at the end of April – I feel a sense of timelessness since we have been out of school.

We have begun our 6th week of remote learning, and we are still fine tuning the process. As evidenced by my conversations with parents and faculty alike, this has been an extremely challenging time. I thank each of you for your commitment to your child's education, and for the effort, time and patience you demonstrate each day. It is not easy to teach your own child (I know, I had my son in my class), especially since you are not necessarily considered an "expert" or, and I quote, "a real teacher." Little do they realize, you have been their first teacher in all things.

Over the past few weeks the faculty has been learning to teach remotely using various methods of technology. It is very different to utilize Google Classroom as a resource when we are in school, and then teach remotely using the same platform. Some teachers are utilizing the Google tools, some are teaching lessons through Zoom, and now, they are adding pre-recorded videos. This last option provides the opportunity for students to view lessons on their own time, or to go back and listen to a lesson again. We hear you, and understand that not all households have the same space or technology, that you need flexibility with the time for the completion of work, that you may have more than one child who needs assistance, and you are working remotely as well. To assist with that, we are now embracing a Monday through Thursday "teaching" week, with Friday used for one on one meetings, extra help, additional reading, time to catch up on assignments or work on projects, and review material. This will provide the students (and you) with some breathing room if work

isn't completed on the same day it has been assigned. We have heard your concerns, and hope this is one way we can support your needs.

We are also striving to find that delicate balance between assigning enough work versus too much work. For example, what would normally take an hour with whole class instruction might only take 15 minutes for your child at home. Reading a chapter in a textbook usually includes several children reading at various speeds, stopping for questions, offering clarifications or summaries, and a group discussion. The same chapter read at home is a very different experience, and may be done at a faster rate and be completed earlier than expected. On the other hand, if your child struggles with the material, this assignment could take much longer and become a frustrating experience for you and your child. If you are finding the work load is not balanced, please reach out to your child's teacher. The faculty is willing to assist and adapt the work as needed, and to work with students individually. This is the purpose of Fridays – to offer support and extra assistance or guidance for everyone who needs it, so please express your concerns to the teacher so they can be addressed.

There have been questions regarding the new dates for the celebration of Confirmation and First Holy Communion. Monsignor Gervasio will be sending a letter out early next week to our 2nd and 8th grade parents/guardians with updated information about the reception of these Sacraments. Please let me know if you have any questions once you receive the letter.

I encourage you and your family to join me for Morning Prayers every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:00 AM. I do a live broadcast on the Our Lady of Sorrows School PTA Facebook page for about 5 minutes, and we come away comforted knowing we have shared our faith as a school community. We may not be together physically, but these are the things that we can do to keep some normalcy to our days.

I would like to thank you for your continued financial support of our school. We are financially sound, and we are continuing the enrollment process for next year. Thank you to all who have submitted their registration paperwork for the 2020-2021 school year. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to submit the paperwork so we can begin the planning process. We will begin ordering books, school planners and materials very shortly – I am excited to look ahead!

We continue to follow Governor Murphy's school closure directives. As of this moment, the return date is set for Monday May 18, 2020. As soon as any new information is received, it will be communicated to you via School Messenger, and put on our school website. In the meantime, please remind your child(ren) to check in each day with their homeroom teacher, to check under the Enrichment classes for their

work, to turn in completed work, and to ask questions when necessary. If you find that your child(ren) needs some extra emotional support during this time, please reach out to me. We have resources to assist those who are anxious, depressed or worried, which is not uncommon in a situation such as this. Please know, I am here to help you however I can. You can email me (mtuohy@olsschool.us) if you need anything at all.

I miss our days together, and look forward to when we can return and do what we love to do – teach your children. In the meantime, be well, stay safe, and continue to pray each and every day.

Have a good weekend,

Mrs. Tuohy