

## ***Parent Letter April 1, 2020***

Dear St. Mary's School Families,

St. Mary's School has been ***"Putting Faith in Children Since 1913."*** Since that time, our country has gone through major world wars, huge recessions, and many serious epidemics. Through all of these times, St. Mary's School has remained resilient and determined to continue ***"Putting Faith in Children Since 1913."***

Our teachers are doing a wonderful job of providing continuous learning through **Remote Learning (newest terminology)** for our students. It certainly is a different way of presenting learning, but our students are receiving it very well! One 3rd grade student said she loved working from home. We are seeing amazing tech skills with some of our junior high school students. I am in the Google Classrooms with our junior high school students and am able to see their work!

We are very sensitive to the challenges that parents face with this new learning model. We know that many of you are working in essential jobs and can only work with your student(s) in the evening. We know that many of you have challenges with the number of devices needed for your children. We know that connectivity may be technically difficult at times. Teachers are balancing their instruction with these challenges for our families.

Regular communication is important. I will be sending you a parent letter each Wednesday through SchoolSpeak. Robbin will also be posting a weekly newsletter on the school website and emailing a copy to you as well--just as we always have done. I am in weekly meetings through Google Meet with principals from St. Mary's Dixon, St. Anne, St. Andrew, and Newman CCHS. Information from those meetings will be shared with our families.

### **Reminders:**

- First Communion is postponed for now
- 8th Grade Trip to DC is now officially canceled. Mrs. Sotelo has important news from World Stride for parents. She will send it out tomorrow after she gets official word from WS--it is good news!

### **New Information**

- The “Stay Home” Executive Order from Governor Pritzker has been extended through April 30, 2020. Therefore, all school buildings are closed; student learning continues through **Remote Learning** means.
- Tuition will be collected during the closure in order to support the financial obligations of our school according to our tuition agreement.
- The discount for early registration for next school year has been extended to May 15th. Families may mail in their registration materials.
- Please check out the school website to view the video of familiar faces. We all miss our students (and you too) so much. We felt it was important to connect with photos.
- Also on the SMS website, **please see the new links to Masses!** Father Bruce (your children are familiar with him because he visits SMS often!) is offering Mass on Wednesdays at 10:00am. You can connect through the link on our school website. You will have to scroll down to the box with “Ceremony” for April 1st. Please explore this option with your child(ren). In my experience, Father Bruce delivers homilies that relate so well with young people. Also note that there is a link to the Diocese of Rockford for a Sunday Mass offered by His Excellency, Bishop David J. Malloy.
- The Diocese is asking schools to use Google Meets instead of Zoom because Zoom contributes to Planned Parenthood. I know many of our families are using Zoom to chat; I am just passing this along to you.

I am attaching a document from the Diocese of Rockford that outlines suggested minimum and maximum times of engagement for students in Remote Learning mode. Our teachers have received this information also.

Stay healthy and home if you can. We miss seeing all of you.

Respectfully in Christ,  
Kathy Howard-Interim Principal