



DIOCESE OF
FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Dear Faculty, Staff, Administrators, Parents and Students,

The Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades wants our school communities to know that you are in his thoughts and prayers during this unprecedented time of building closures, and distance learning due to COVID-19. Click [HERE](#) to view and listen to his messages of love, gratitude, compassion, and hope as we head into Holy Week and Easter. We are grateful to Bishop Rhoades as he shares his passion for our Savior, Jesus Christ with us, and his Christ-like servant-leadership.

Our thoughts and our earnest prayers are with you during this extraordinary time. Our schools are communities in which we discover, learn, and develop our God-given talents as well as witness and encourage each other in faith. It hurts when we are not together. As our Holy Father preached last week, "Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time." We offer this message of gratitude and hope as we prepare to enter the holiest of weeks.

To our teachers, thank you for your incredible efforts to redesign your teaching in short order. As one teacher wrote, "she misses the best part of teaching, which is being with her students." We know that she speaks for many of you. Let us offer this hardship as a Lenten sacrifice for all those afflicted with COVID-19 and for those who care for them.

To our parents, thank you for making the sacrifices to continue to support Catholic education. We recognize that the last couple of weeks have been especially challenging, as many of you transitioned to working from home while juggling supporting your children's continued learning. Last Friday in his extraordinary [urbi et orbi](#) message, Pope Francis reminded us "How many fathers, mothers, grandparents, and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer."

For our students: our teachers, staff members, and administrators miss you dearly. Thank you for your resilience. Thank you for helping your siblings and your parents during this time. Continue to work hard. We look forward to the day when we can be back with you, to hear your joyful laughter once again, and see your smiling faces.

Although we may be physically apart, we are united as we prepare to enter the holiest of weeks in which we remember and make present Jesus' journey from Palm Sunday, through Holy Thursday and Good Friday, to the glory of the resurrection on Easter Sunday. We have included some excellent resources for your families to use throughout this week. To access them, click on the following [HOLY WEEK AT HOME](#), [PALM SUNDAY](#), [HOLY THURSDAY](#), [GOOD FRIDAY](#), [HOLY SATURDAY](#), and [EASTER SUNDAY](#). Please also consider connecting with your parish and Bishop Rhoades through the various broadcasts of the liturgies. May we turn our longing for Christ in the Eucharist into greater devotion. May we turn our desire to be with our fellow parishioners into even greater unity. By our entry into the liturgies of this Holy Week, may we more fully grasp, again in the



words of Pope Francis, that “We have an anchor: by his cross, we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross, we have been redeemed. We have hope: by his cross, we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side.”

Also, we wanted to make everyone aware of the Executive Order from the Governor of Indiana, Eric J. Holcomb. While our buildings will remain closed until the end of the school year, our Catholic schools will continue to offer high-quality distance learning. Click [HERE](#) for a summary of his executive order that contains information about the remainder of the school year, graduation requirements, teacher licensing requirements, and deadlines & other requirements—more details to follow.

May the Lord in his mercy heal us, and may his Blessed Mother intercede for us as we prepare to enter this holiest of weeks.

Blessings,

Carl Loesch
Secretary for Catholic Education

Joseph (Joe) A. Brettnacher, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Jeff Kieffer
Associate Superintendent