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## Catholic Diocese of Columbus

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October 23, 2020

Office of the Bishop  
614 • 224 • 2251

Dear Families of the Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Columbus,

It is hard to believe that we are approaching the end of the first quarter of an academic year. And it has certainly been a year like no other. I have enjoyed greeting so many of you in the mornings at drop offs, and I have been gladdened by the joy in the faces of your children as they rush into their schools to begin their days. I hope to continue to get around to visiting our schools in ways that are safe and in keeping with the guidelines that so many have worked to put in place for the well-being of our school communities. Our schools are strong, vital communities that have risen to the challenges of our times.

I must acknowledge the heroic work of the administrators and teachers at all 53 of the Catholic schools within our Diocese. Their tremendous dedication to your children allowed our schools to safely reopen for classes this Fall and to remain open. I am grateful for all the efforts that have taken place to allow us to continue to achieve our daily goal of providing as normal an educational experience as possible while meeting all of the health and safety protocols.

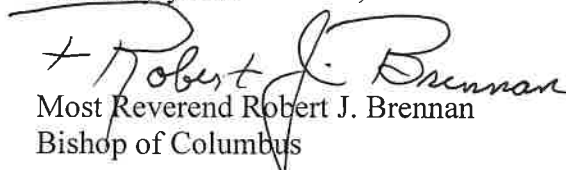
Thus far, we have seen few cases of coronavirus at our schools and no cases of spread within our schools. The positive cases we have seen have been contracted away from school and school-related activities. For that care and concern for others in our community, I would like to thank all of you.

Sadly, our work is not yet done as we labor forward under the continued challenges of this pandemic. Through this letter, I want to encourage you to stay vigilant and strong in the safety protocols in place in our schools. The wearing of masks, the maintenance of appropriate social distancing, the adherence to quarantine directives from the local health departments, keeping children home when they show any symptoms associated with coronavirus or with any illness, and making careful, responsible decisions about activities outside of school will continue to allow our schools to serve you. The last point is very important given the spread of the virus is happening in gatherings and activities outside the schools at an alarming rate across the state. For that reason, our perseverance is even more necessary.

Recently, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, released his latest encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*. As I read his powerful message of fraternity and friendship, I paused at his call for a renewed cultivation of kindness, that great fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Father tells us that kindness is that virtue that pushes back on self-focus and that, through “esteem and respect for others” can create a culture that is transformative. It is this virtue that we saw in action that allowed us to return to school and the same virtue that we must continue to cultivate in ourselves and in our schools so that we may carry on in this difficult journey together amid so much fear and sickness.

Please know that I pray for you every day, and I ask for your prayers for each other.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Robert J. Brennan  
Bishop of Columbus