



**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

March 23, 2020

VIA E-MAIL

Dear Catholic School Parents, Educators, Students, and Supporters,

This is a generation-defining moment. Like every such moment that has gone before, it is not only the crisis itself but also how we respond that matters most. Through prayer, we entrust to God our school communities, as we share Mary's conviction: "Nothing will be impossible for God" (Luke 1:37).

All 87 Catholic school communities of the Archdiocese of Detroit have responded to the challenges heroically. Challenges remain, and as we move forward, we will be guided by the best understanding and evidence for what will protect and serve our students and what will best contribute to the health, safety, and welfare of the members of our school communities. While we must keep social distance at this time, please know we will keep our eyes fixed on Jesus (Heb 12:1) as [we heed Archbishop Vigneron's call to remain spiritually and academically close](#).

Archbishop Vigneron and I are especially [proud of the thousands of Catholic educators that spent all of last week](#) developing detailed, methodical, and effective distance learning plans so that all of our schools are well prepared to meet this challenge starting today. As this situation is dynamic and given Governor Whitmer's [new executive order issued today](#), please know that the [Department of Catholic Schools](#) and all of our 87 Catholic schools are also ready to complete this academic year via distance education technology, along with thousands of universities and other educational institutions. As I shared with you [this past Friday](#), all distance learning instruction will count toward our instructional requirements.

Recognizing how difficult this situation is for every member of our Catholic school family, Archbishop Vigneron and I thank each and every one of you for the sacrifices you've made and the work you've done in meeting the challenges we face and will continue to face.

I know every parent and student is deeply concerned and uncertain about what comes next. Many events are canceled or postponed, goals remain uncompleted, plays are not being performed, sporting events and competitions are not taking place, trips are canceled, projects are interrupted, and many, many other activities and events are or will be canceled or postponed. It is deeply challenging to have so much changed so quickly. I understand and empathize, it is difficult. Please know though, that the education of our students will continue unabated.

UNLEASH THE GOSPEL

12 State Street, Detroit, Michigan 48226-1823 | 313-237-5800 | aod.org

To the Class of 2020, your Catholic school journey will not end this way, I promise. It will be some time before we know the specifics for formal graduation ceremonies, but we will do our utmost to give your achievements and time in our Catholic schools the fullest celebration possible.

I cannot begin to say enough in praise of our principals and teachers, who continue to keep our Catholic schools functioning. Archbishop Vigneron and I are tremendously grateful to each of you and proud of how you've risen to the challenges. In addition to your school responsibilities, you have children at home, aged parents, and family members at risk, and are concerned for your own health and safety. We recognize and appreciate that, as you give your all so that we can meet the needs of our students.

Recognizing your personal needs and as Superintendent of Catholic Schools, I am permitting chief administrators at our local school communities to shorten their respective academic year if and when called for by the local situation. Any decision by a school to take this action will be communicated by your school's chief administrator in the coming weeks.

It is unfortunate that this semester has been so upended. Archbishop Vigneron and I appreciate your patience and understanding, as our school communities work their way through these challenges and as we deal with new challenges and difficulties. Looking to the future, please know that as we move past this current challenge, you will be hearing from us about our plans and programs for next year.

We know in faith that as Jesus has promised us in John 15, when we abide and remain in him, we will bear much fruit, and apart from him, we can do nothing. Together, I ask that you [join the faithful around the archdiocese in prayer](#) for an end to COVID-19. As well, I ask that you pray for Governor Whitmer and government officials as they lead the people of the State of Michigan through this time. As [Archbishop Vigneron has said](#), "people of prayer are never helpless – never hopeless."

I am grateful and honored to be able to work with each and every one of you. There's no other community in the world I'd rather stand with. Stay strong, stay safe, stay in touch with each other, and stay in touch with Jesus Christ. Together, we will meet this moment.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,



Kevin D. Kijewski, J.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools

Cc: The Most Reverend Allen Vigneron, Ph.D.
The Very Reverend Jeffrey Day, V.G.
The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer, J.D.