



TIMOTHY CARDINAL DOLAN

Para leer este mensaje en español, haga clic aquí. Click here to read this message online.

July 9, 2020

Feast of St. Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions

Month of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus

Dear Family of the Archdiocese of New York,

While it is always difficult to be the bearer of bad news, you have told us, time and again, that you would like to hear such news directly from us. That is why I write to share the sad news that 20 of our beloved Catholic schools will not be reopening this September due to a substantial decline in enrollment in many of our schools brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. A more positive development will see three of our schools up in Orange County merge into one, stronger, more robust school community. ([You can find a press release here.](#))

Like so many families, businesses, and institutions around the world, the schools which will not be reopening are victims of the fall-out of the coronavirus. Despite \$40 million in annual subsidy the archdiocese provides to our Catholic schools, our generous scholarship programs, and tuition kept as low as possible, many families, having already experienced their own loss of income, felt unable to plan ahead and re-register their students for the 2020-2021 school year. Add to that months of unopened churches and the resulting loss of parish funds which traditionally help support the schools, and it became clear that these schools, despite heroic efforts to save them, would not be able to reopen this September.

Closing a school is something we *never* want to do. We all love these kids, and the moms and dads who work so hard to send them to our schools. Our educators, including your local principal and teachers, devote their lives to educating your children. That is why I am very grateful to our pastors and principals who are *all* on board in finding schools nearby where the affected families may continue their Catholic education. We are all committed to carrying on the 200-year legacy of Catholic education in New York.

This news will be particularly difficult for those families who had to change schools last year and were just settling in at their new schools. To all of you, especially, we understand the pain this causes, and we will work tirelessly to help you find your next school.

Some will understandably say that this announcement came late, considering school has been out for a couple weeks. While there's never a good moment for news like this, we do regret the need for the unconventional timing. We could not have anticipated the effects of the coronavirus, and when it became apparent that some schools were in trouble, our team, led by Michael Deegan, Superintendent of Schools, and Susan George, Director of the *Inner City Scholarship Fund*, worked non-stop attempting to increase enrollment and get some of these wonderful schools *off* the list so they could reopen in the fall. I am pleased to say that, through their efforts, a number of schools originally thought to be in trouble will be able to remain open this September.

But, Catholic schools will always be "the little guy." Our schools will never enjoy the fiscal muscle enjoyed by government schools, which are provided billions of tax dollars.

I am very concerned that if our elected officials in Washington don't do the right thing and provide more assistance for our schools in the HEROES Act now making its way through Congress, we may be back here again in a few months shuttering even more of our schools. I hope you will join me in letting our elected officials know we are watching. I promise you, when these same politicians call me asking for answers about why these schools are not reopening, I'll be ready with my own inquiry as to their support – or lack thereof – for this important legislation.

Please know that none of the schools that are closing were "failing" schools. Each provided an exceptional academic experience and we *owe it* to the proud 200-year heritage of Catholic education to carry on. The world needs its next generation of leaders, neighbors and friends. It needs us to turn out adults who learn as children how to live their lives according to the greatest teacher of them all, Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your patience and understanding, and please keep all of our school children, parents, teachers, and school administrators in your prayers.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Tim. Card. Dolan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York