



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

I wanted my communication to you this week to express how proud I am of our students, teachers, principals, and you, our parents and guardians, for how you all have risen to the challenges associated with this unprecedented situation. Despite the many obstacles we all are facing due to the COVID-19 virus, our students are continuing to receive academic instruction and preparation for the coming school year. I believe this is our finest example of family and Catholic school partnership.

Our schools are committed to upholding our mission to form the whole child. Not only are our students continuing to receive academic instruction, but our schools are helping our students grow emotionally and socially, as well. One of the marks of a strong Catholic school is it is animated by communion and community. Many of our schools continue to provide emotional support and wellness-check resources, not only to our students, but also to parents. Schools have organized “recess” for students via web conferences so students are able to interact with each other, not just in an academic setting, but also in a more relaxed environment so they can continue to grow, socially. These opportunities are important because it is all too easy, in this time when we must practice social distancing for the health of all, to fall into the trap of becoming emotionally distant as well.

Most importantly, our schools are working to support our students in the growth of their faith. Our faith is the living force behind our schools and the reason they exist. Our schools will continue to not only provide religion class, but also provide opportunities for daily school community prayer remotely as well as, provide resources for your families to celebrate the faith at home. The Archdiocese of Washington also has many opportunities for us to participate in live-streamed Masses and other prayer services, which can be found at <https://adw.org/live-streamed-masses-and-prayers/>.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, in his address to all the faithful last Friday, shared the Gospel passage of Jesus in the boat with the disciples and how he calmed the sea and the winds of the storm. Pope Francis called us all to greater faith and to trust that Jesus, who calmed the storm then, will also calm the “storm” we currently face in the world today. Our schools, united as one community of hope and faith under our shepherd, Archbishop Gregory, will continue to meet the present challenges and fulfill our mission to form our students. As we enter into Holy Week, Archbishop Gregory wanted to reach out with a special video message for our students, which can be found [here](#). We are blessed to have a shepherd who is so supportive of our schools and enjoys spending time with our students.

Finally, please know that I am so thankful for all of your support for our schools and be assured of my prayers for your family as we enter into this holiest time of the year.

Sincerely in Christ,

William H. Ryan, III
Secretary for Catholic Schools