

May 8, 2020

Dear Faithful Catholic School Community,

I pray this correspondence finds you and your families safe and well. Across the country we are celebrating Teacher Appreciation Week. Particularly for us, we celebrate the gift of our teacher ministers – people driven by their faith to impart Gospel values to the next generation of servant leaders. Our teachers, like Jesus, walk with our students through a journey of discovery, knowledge and spiritual formation. We are grateful for their vocation, now more than ever. Thank you to all of our Catholic educators who are going above and beyond for our students at this critical time.

In recent days, we have been witnessing modifications to *Safer at Home* orders by our local and state leaders. We've been told that this will be a staggered process that will allow certain businesses to resume operations with modifications. It's been our prayer that efforts over the past eight weeks would have allowed us to safely return to campuses before the end of the school year. After recent discussions with public health officials in the three counties we serve, public and private K-12 campuses will not be included in the initial stages of sector reopening. **As a result, distance learning will continue through the end of the school year.**

As parents and educators, there is nothing we want more than for our students to celebrate the culmination of the school year together, particularly for our graduates. Though the moment may not afford us the opportunity to physically come together, we are all committed to honoring our students now and in-person when gatherings are permitted. Guidance on end of the year activities has been provided to principals and I commend our school communities for their creative plans to celebrate student achievements. Despite the present circumstances, our schools have defied the odds and stand out as a source of God's love and steadfastness.

Looking forward, we are making plans to start the school year smart. **The resumption of instruction in the fall will proceed as scheduled and according to each school's specific calendar.** Though we cannot determine what the public health conditions will look like for schools in August, our goal is to return to in-person instruction. We've been advised by public health officials to prepare for new protocols and modifications to our campus environment. We've also been told that we should anticipate the possibility of a resumption of distance learning if *Safer at Home* orders are reinstated. We will be prepared for both.

Thank you for your patience and solidarity. Let us pray to our heavenly Mother Mary that she may bless us, especially our mothers, with her divine grace and love – Happy Mother's Day.

Yours in Christ,



Paul M. Escala
Superintendent of Schools