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Diocese of Palm Beach

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March 27, 2020

Dear Members of our Catholic School Community,

The last two weeks have provided us with both challenges and opportunities, and I have been impressed with how we, as a community, have rallied to embrace our shared difficulties and move forward. While much is still unknown and at times it is difficult to see a light at the end of the tunnel, we share a faith that we can rely on to assure us that this, too, shall pass. There will be light after the immense darkness. After all that's the Easter story of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Our administrators and teachers have been working countless hours in preparation for virtual instruction, which will begin on Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Please know that we are doing our best to provide our school children with the instruction and information they need to have a successful fourth quarter of the school year. In many ways we are blessed that we have already completed the first three quarters of the school year and our 2nd-8th grade students have already taken their national standardized tests (TerraNova). The virtual learning that is planned for the fourth quarter will ensure that our students obtain what they need to successfully move on to their next grade. Moving into this last quarter of the school year, we will seek quality over quantity and focus on the essential curriculum that needs to be covered in each subject and grade. Thank you in advance to our schools for working very hard to make this a reality.

The Catholic Church teaches that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children. This could not be more true than at this moment in time! Our teachers will provide "the basics" in their videos and posts, but it is imperative for the teacher to partner with each parent and child for the fullness of the virtual learning experience. There will be glitches along the way--some days your technology won't work at home or will be overloaded, other days this may occur at the school. Society, in general, does not know how the system will manage so many students (public and private) online at one time. Each school, each classroom, and each teacher will come to this with a different level of expertise and knowledge-- as will each child and parent. This is an opportunity for us all to grow together. Please be gracious and understanding with each other and refrain from unkind comparisons. This is uncharted territory for all of us and we need to maintain our spirit of Christian charity in working together. It is through our own acts of kindness, generosity and charity that we bring Christ's light into our daily situations to alleviate the stress, anxiety and darkness brought on by our isolation and the virus.

For all of our children, and I would encourage parents/guardians to lead by example and read every day for at least 30 minutes. For our littlest ones, parents can take 3 or 4 moments in each day to read stories with your child. Even our older elementary children like reading with someone. Maybe your family would like to choose a novel and read a chapter or two each day together instead of watching television or other screen-time activities. Please take the time to focus on reading and math. There is a great children's book, [The Math Curse](#), where everything the narrator encounters turns into a math problem --from the clock on the wall, to recipes for dinner, the number of shirts in the closet and so on. Be creative with your

children and help them learn some math along the way. Do puzzles and play board games! Take walks and bike rides together as a family – of course, keep appropriate social distancing!

For those of you who have been furloughed, laid off, unemployed or on reduced schedules, please talk with your principal or pastor on how we can help you manage your remaining tuition payments. In order for all of our teachers to continue serving you, we still have payroll for all of them. Payroll is typically 70-80% of a school budget. We understand that many of you may be facing financial challenges, so I encourage you to please schedule a call and share this with your principal or pastor.

I am hoping and praying that this only lasts for one quarter or less; let's keep in mind that this equates to only 2% of the time your child will be in school for grades K to 12. Please be assured of our prayers and support over the coming weeks. United in Christ and working together we will see an Easter Resurrection at the end of this journey.

Yours in Christ,

Gary Gelo

Gary Gelo
Superintendent of Schools