



ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

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May 15, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I would like to thank those who were able to virtually attend the All Schools Mass on Wednesday. Archbishop Gregory very much misses visiting and spending time in our schools and was happy to celebrate with all of us, virtually. We are very blessed to have an Archbishop who is so supportive of our mission in Catholic schools, to help our families form their children, both spiritually and academically. Working together with families, our schools are able to help form our students into witnesses that help draw others to God just like the young saints, Jacinta and Francisco, that Archbishop Gregory spoke of in his homily on Wednesday.

I know that many of you are concerned about next school year in relation to COVID-19, and how it will impact the opening of schools in the fall. We understand there are still many unanswered questions but I want to inform you that our office has begun to form task force for a reopening of our schools. Guidance from local health departments and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) will inform our practices to ensure safety and good health for our students and staff. Our promise is to provide a Christ-filled learning environment for your child. Although, what school looks like in the fall is still being worked out, the Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools Office (CSO) will determine the best plan for our Catholic schools. The CSO will follow state and local mandates, as well as, guidance from Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), District of Columbia public schools (DCPS), the task force previously mentioned, and the Archdiocesan Board of Education. However, our decision may not specifically follow the local school systems' plans, but it will be a plan to keep students safe in the best learning environment.

As of today, it is premature to know which guidance or protocols the state and county districts will provide or mandate regarding returning to school in the fall. It is unclear if all of Maryland's counties and the District of Columbia will be operating under the same mandates. The task force will include contingency plans that include a full return for all students and staff, a partial or staggered return (blended learning, which includes in-person classroom and distance learning) or continued campus closure with distance learning only. We will pray that our regions all improve to allow our students to return to school. In any case, our schools will be prepared to implement a multitude of plans that we will finalize by the end of July.

I will continue to keep you informed during this fluid situation, as it impacts our area. Please continue to pray for the health and safety of our school communities.

God Bless,

William H. Ryan, III
Secretary for Catholic Schools