



## DIOCESE OF ORANGE

DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

13280 CHAPMAN AVENUE, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

April 1, 2020

Dear Catholic School Parents,

May the grace and peace of our Lord be with you during this extraordinary time.

This has been a trying time for all of us as we confront COVID-19. The rapidly evolving news stories surrounding this pandemic have undoubtedly caused you great concern. As we continue to practice social distancing and implement distance learning, we remember that although we are separated across our diocese, we are bound by our faith.

In accordance with the President's updated guidelines, school campuses will remain closed through the end of April. Yesterday, the California superintendent for public education recommended that public schools should prepare for distance learning for the remainder of the year. While we are still hopeful that we might return to campus on May 4<sup>th</sup>, much will depend on orders from our government and public health officials. Our timeline going forward will be informed by the Center for Disease Control & Prevention, the Orange County Department of Education, and the Orange County Health Care Agency.

We continue to feel confident that our students are receiving a strong academic program delivered by highly qualified teachers. Our teachers are committed to ensuring that our children are meeting grade level academic standards and will be well prepared for the next grade level. Although we do not gather on our school campuses daily, we continue to build community and communion through daily prayer and faith-filled communications.

Please know that the safety and well-being of your children remains our top priority. We will continue to share updates with you as this situation evolves.

Pope Saint John Paul II reminds us to "Be not afraid."

*"Have no fear of moving into the unknown. Simply step out fearlessly knowing that I am with you, therefore no harm can befall you; all is very, very well. Do this in complete faith and confidence."*

May we take comfort in the love of Our God and allow Him to guide us and protect us during these uncertain times.

As we enter into Holy Week, please know you and your children are in my daily prayers. May Christ continue to bless you and your family and guide us as we move into the unknown.

In mission,

Erin C.O. Barisano, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools  
Diocese of Orange

**Addendum April 1, 2020 4:43 pm**

After sending my letter dated April 1, 2020, Governor Newsom announced that closing California schools for the remainder of the academic year “is the right thing to do.” While this is not a mandate to close schools, it is likely that public schools across the state will remain closed. As people of faith, we remain hopeful that our students will be able to return to campus before the end of the school year. We will continue to make final decisions and announcements regarding campus closures in a timely manner as guided by the Center for Disease Control & Prevention, the Orange County Department of Education, and the Orange County Health Care Agency.