

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School
“Building a Strong Foundation in Faith and Knowledge”

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March 27, 2020

Dear St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Family,

It is my sincere wish that this letter finds you and your loved ones well. Please know how much your teachers and principal appreciate your efforts these past two weeks in launching and implementing our Distance Learning (DL) program. Without question, as we move forward this has and will continue to take a great measure of our time and attention. However, I believe we have and will continue to progress together as we learn new things, and deepen our faith as we pray for each other during this time of unprecedented challenge.

Our faculty and staff met twice this past week to discuss many things related to our DL program – lesson content, instructional methods, teacher-prepared explanatory videos for new material, and the expanded use of real-time Google Classroom meet-ups and Zoom teacher-led question and answer sessions. We will continue to do such meetings, and ask for your continued cooperation in reaching out to us should you experience technical difficulties, or have other questions regarding DL. While our school building may be closed, our Christ-centered teaching and learning remains open, ready, vibrant, and caring as we continue this new journey together.

With this in mind and, in light of increasingly stringent public health mandates, please note that all student work must be sent through electronic means, i.e. through Google Classroom, scanning and e-mail, or by taking a picture and uploading/e-mailing the work to the teacher. For obvious reasons, the Parish Office vestibule is now closed and thus we have discontinued the physical pick-up and drop-off of student work. Your cooperation and understanding on these matters are greatly appreciated.

Please know that students attending virtual classes must be neatly dressed or wearing their school uniforms. Your attention and cooperation on this matter is appreciated as teachers are working very hard to minimize distractions and maximize their efficient use of real-time teaching and student conferencing.

Virtual learning requires a great deal of time, effort, and concentration for all involved. However it is important that students and their families build in some free time as well while observing current pandemic-driven health and safety protocols. I am sure that our students and families have made the time to take a nice walk or hike, play a pick-up

basketball or whiffle ball game, help prepare a meal, bake a cake, or discuss some good books that they are reading. Perhaps you may also wish to face-time relatives or friends you have not seen in a while, or attend virtual Mass in the comfort of your home. Have you considered hosting a virtual family dinner or board game, or creating and then implementing a spring clean-up plan for your lawn and landscaping? Just a few ideas as our weather turns more pleasant and the signs of spring around us become more apparent.

I continue to pray for the health and safety of your family, and please ask that you continue to keep our students, faculty, staff, friends and loved ones in your prayers as well.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention, and my best wishes and God's blessings to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Patrick D. Higgins, Ed.D.
Principal

