

Families and Students,

As we, the lay faithful of Ohio, continue to receive more information regarding the gradual reopening of the state, I wanted to reach out to you regarding the summer plans for youth ministry. Specifically, I would like to address Camp GAudeo, which is for our current 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

This camp, going into its 6<sup>th</sup> year, has historically been a wonderful celebration of our faith and community – made possible by tireless work from adult volunteers and a slew of incredible high school counselors. When students were initially sent home from school in March, my thoughts immediately went to the summer and to how we could proactively plan for a future that was so in flux. I have been in constant discussion and prayer with our parish staff, other youth ministers from many Christian faith traditions, the archdiocesan staff, and others to determine decision-making principles and best practices. To wit, I would like to share the following:

We are still operating under the hope that we can gather for camp on the scheduled week of June 22-26. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions on us and event venues we typically use, we will be switching models. The camp will now be offered on campus without bus transportation to local venues. We will be renting equipment or contracting services to come to us to still provide a slew of large-scale activities and an immense amount of fun. To ease the burden on families, our price for the camp will be lowered to only \$75 dollars per student (with scholarships available), which brings the price to \$15 per day.

I am also looking into ways to adjust if we need to have a smaller number of participants on-site at one time to make sure we can still accommodate all campers who want to participate. We will communicate any changes to this plan, if necessary, by June 1st. Only after all possible scenarios have been exhausted would the decision be made to cancel camp this year.

I share all of this with you so that you can know where my discernment is coming from regarding this important issue. This camp event is a very special time to invite new students into our ministry, to celebrate the leadership of our high school students, and (above all) to gather in the name of Jesus. My greatest efforts will continue to be directed toward providing as much ministry as we can for our middle and high school students throughout the months ahead. However, my primary concern is the health and well-being of our students, and all decisions will ultimately pass through that lens. I will continue to evaluate the situation based on the guidance set forth by Governor DeWine and the CDC in accordance with the protecting the students involved in camp and the expectations and recommendations in place for such gatherings during these times.

Please let me know if you have any thoughts, questions, or concerns, and continue to pray for me as I will be praying for you. Thank you, and God bless you.

In Christ,

Bradley Barnes, Coordinator of Youth Ministry