

Dear Families,

The beginning of June is always an exciting time, filled with celebrations and natural transitions. This year, because of COVID-19, we are celebrating in different ways, but appreciating our relationships on a deeper level and treasuring the support we have around us.

As we complete the academic year in our Catholic schools, your children and our educators and you adults who have helped them deserve a round of applause for enduring difficult challenges in these unprecedented times. It wasn't easy, but thanks for your dedication and the support you have given to your parish and your school. We helped lead the way in responding quickly when school buildings were closed and we adapted to e-learning. Our teachers showed great creativity in providing the kind of quality education that distinguishes Catholic schools. In fact, in a recent survey, parents evaluated the effectiveness of our e-learning efforts very favorably.

However, the question on everyone's mind is: Where do we go from here?

Cardinal Cupich and our school administrators want you to know that we have every expectation that our schools will be open in the fall. And that we will employ measures that keep the safety of your children a top priority. We are working with experts in this area, as well as state and local public health officials. Anyone returning to one of our school buildings can have confidence that we have taken every measure we can: enhanced regular cleaning and disinfecting of high contact areas, the use of plexiglass barriers in common spaces such as main offices, the availability of adequate supplies of sanitizer and PPE, and temperature checks on anyone showing symptoms.

We also know that some will prefer or need to stay at home. Remote learning will be available for these students, so they can keep pace with their class.

Our decision to plan aggressively for reopening our schools this year is based on the value we place on face-to-face instruction and the community learning environment that has been a hallmark of Catholic school education over the years. Over the summer we will keep you up to date as our plans develop, but we are sending this first message to assure you we will do whatever is needed to open our schools this year.

We can only do this with your continued support. So, if you have not yet registered at your school for this coming year, please do so immediately. We are only as strong as the partnership we have with parents who enroll their children in our schools. We have a proud history of education and we should not allow this challenge to undermine or diminish that tradition. What we do in this moment will have an impact on Catholic school education for years to come.

The cardinal and I will pray for you and your families, asking God to keep all of you safe over the summer months. We want to see everyone return to our schools this year, healthy and ready to get to work. God bless you all.