



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD

65 ELLIOT STREET

P.O. BOX 1730

SPRINGFIELD, MA 01102-1730

TELEPHONE: 413.452.0830 FACSIMILE: 413.452.0555



March 13, 2020

Dear Catholic School Families:

May God's peace be with you. We are writing to update you regarding the Catholic Schools Office response to the quickly changing situation surrounding COVID-19. According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), most people in the United States still have little immediate risk of exposure to this virus; however, it is currently spreading more widely in the United States than had been anticipated one week ago. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there have been 108 presumptive and confirmed cases, and there may be other cases that have not been reported. We will continue to monitor the responses and resources provided by the CDC, World Health Organization, and the Massachusetts Department of Health. As we receive information, we will communicate with all of you in a way that is factual and compassionate.

We met with the administrators and principals of all of our Catholic schools on Wednesday of this week to discuss preparation and communication. They have been encouraged to contact each of you regarding what they are doing in the schools to keep the learning environment safe and healthy. They also have been developing plans to continue to provide instructional support in the event of a multi-week school closure. School closures will be determined at each school in consultation with us and the local and state public health departments.

In addition to our recommended actions from last week, we are also recommending the following actions:

- Field trips through March and early April should be cancelled. Plans for field trips scheduled later than that should be revisited in early April.
- School activities that may result in large crowds should be postponed.
- The Spelling Bee, which was postponed, will be tentatively rescheduled later in the spring.

To learn more, visit:

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/COVID19
- The World Health Organization: www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health: <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

With the inundation of information and uncertainty, we know that anxiety is very high. The Lord reminds us to lay our burdens at His feet. Let us not lose hope in the Lord who can heal all sickness, infirmity, and anxiety. Please continue to pray with us for those suffering in mind, body, and spirit. We pray that Jesus continues to guide the hands of those working in health-care and support systems, as well as those working to find cures to these diseases.

In Christ through Mary,

Daniel R. Baillargeon, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Springfield, MA