



Diocese of Knoxville Catholic Schools: Preparing Scholars, Leaders and Saints

March 31, 2020

Diocese of Knoxville
Office of the Superintendent of Catholic Schools
805 S. Northshore Drive
Knoxville, Tennessee 37919

Dear Catholic School Communities:

Please be assured of my continued prayers for your health and general welfare. I am writing to you today to share that all the Catholic schools within our diocese will extend our school closures and at-home learning virtual practices through the end of April. It is our hope that teachers will be able to return to their schools on **Friday, May 1, 2020** for in-service and that students will return on Monday, **May 4, 2020**. With this in mind, we will continue to act upon recommendations made by diocesan, health and government officials and will adjust schedules accordingly.

During this extended period of at-home learning, the school leaders, faculty and I will continue to collaborate and work to ensure our learning expectations provide a sensible structure, focus on connection and community, and emphasize essential learning for student mastery. As a faithful community, I also would encourage you as a family to participate in the available streaming opportunities for Mass and prayerful devotions. I want to personally thank those of you who have reached out to me or to our school leaders to share your concerns or recommendations, as they have been very helpful. I hope that you will continue to maintain this open communication with us.

In closing, I would like to share a novena that you may pray with your family or just for yourself. This prayer is for those affected by the coronavirus pandemic; those who are at risk, those who are currently sick and suffering, for the medical professionals working to save lives, and others who are risking themselves in their jobs for the good of others, as well as those who are grieving for loss of any kind.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Father in Heaven, have mercy on us and on the whole world. We come to you today with our fears and concerns -- You know what's in our hearts. We love You, trust You, we need You. We ask You to be with us. Stay with us. Help us through these times of uncertainty and sorrow.

We know you are the Divine Physician, the healer of all. And so, we ask that you bring your loving and healing presence to all those who are sick and suffering right now. Please comfort them. Please be with the grieving families of those who have

passed away. Please have mercy on those who have died, may they be with You in heaven. Please stand at the side of all medical professionals who are putting themselves at risk while they work to bring healing to others. Lord, we are scared and we are sorrowful. Please heal us. Send us your peace and overwhelming presence.

(Mention your intentions here)

St. Anthony the Great, patron of those affected by infectious diseases, pray for us!

Jesus, we thirst for You. You chose to enter this world as a vulnerable baby. Be with the most vulnerable now. Help us to continue to return to You with our whole hearts throughout this ordeal.

Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

In Christ,

Dr. Sedonna J. Prater
Sedonna J. Prater, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Catholic Schools, sprater@dioknox.org,
865-223-0244 (cell)
865-584-3307 (work)