



DIOCESE OF ORANGE
DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
13280 CHAPMAN AVENUE, GARDEN GROVE, CA

April 30, 2020

Dear Catholic School Parents,

I pray that this note finds you healthy and well as we continue our stay-at-home order. While these days seem to melt into one another, please know that our schools continue to work harder than ever as we continue distance learning. Our Department of Catholic Schools team worked diligently over Easter break to ensure that our teachers and principals have access to the right tools so your children's learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and grounded in our Catholic faith. Whether we are gathered together in a virtual classroom or participating in a streaming mass, the past six weeks have proven that our Catholic schools continue to be committed to academic excellence, faith formation, and service.

Two days ago Governor Newsom announced that the 2020-2021 school year may start as early as July or August to make up for learning lost this spring. As I have previously communicated, Catholic schools were able to pivot quickly and adapt to distance learning almost overnight. The level of thoughtful preparation and professional support has made it possible to keep our students on track for promotion to the next grade level without experiencing a loss in learning. Thus, our schools will adhere to a traditional school calendar and begin the school year as scheduled in late August or September. Additionally, as members of the California Association of Private School Organizations, we have been reassured that no formal consideration of protocols for the reopening of campuses has been launched at the state level, and that the views and concerns of the private school community will definitely be sought.

As we look to returning to campuses in August, there are still many uncertainties surrounding us. Please know that we are discussing contingency plans with our principals and collaborating with other dioceses throughout California. We are in constant contact with the Orange County Department of Education and Orange County Health Care Agency, but even then, it is difficult to plan for an unknown future. The health and safety of our students and teachers continue to guide our decision-making, and we are exercising both creativity and caution as we vision our return to our school campuses. Social distancing, disinfecting protocols, hand washing, and technology are at the heart of our conversations as we draft plans to bring our students back to campus. Rest assured that you will hear from my office as well as from your school principal as plans unfold.

Pope Francis tells us, "Hope opens new horizons, making us capable of dreaming what is not even imaginable." As people of faith, may we be filled with the hope of the Risen Lord as we carefully plan and courageously dream for the future of our Catholic schools.

In mission,

Erin C.O. Barisano, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Orange

ERIN C. O. BARISANO, ED. D.

SUPERINTENDENT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE: 714-282-3056 FAX: 714-282-4276 E-MAIL: EBARISANO@RCBO.ORG