



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT ~ CATHOLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

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*Our lives begin to end
the day we become silent
about things that matter."*

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dear Parents and Guardians of Catholic Academy and Parish School Students,

The recent death of George Floyd, and others in similar circumstances remind us that racism continues to cast a long shadow across our nation. We must respond, not in violence, but in a renewed commitment to justice and peace.

We cannot answer all the questions regarding the death of George Floyd and the turmoil that it has erupted since. However, we need to respond to the children we serve. Our response must originate from our Gospel teachings of love and compassion. In all we do, this must be our compass.

With that direction in mind, principals and their Catholic Academies and Parish School communities were provided with materials for delivering Jesus' message, particularly in his parable of the Good Samaritan... ***Love your neighbor as yourself.*** Over the course of the previous week, we heard that the lessons had been shared with the students in our Catholic Academies and Parish Schools, culminating on Friday, in many communities, in the participation of a Prayer Service for Peace. Our message must be that we are all God's children and it is our obligation to continue to pray for peace and safety for all.

I am also writing to you presently, to inform you of procedures for the closing of the 2019-2020 school year. The end of this year has certainly been unlike any other. I would like to take a moment to thank the teachers, school leaders, students, and everyone for pulling together and making distance learning work well. Most of all, I would like to thank all parents and guardians. With no training, you have been asked to become teachers along with still being parents. Thank you! Educating children is a team effort and distance learning has highlighted that as never before.

As we approach the final weeks of the school year, please take note of the following points:

- ✓ The final week of school will be the week of June 15, 2020. Instruction will conclude on Tuesday, June 16th, with Wednesday, June 17th planned for a virtual field day. Thursday, June 18th will serve as a clerical day for teachers and school staff to finalize all school administrative details. Friday, June 19th will be the final day of the 2019-2020 school year, culminating in either a closing prayer service or liturgy. School leaders will be providing school-specific information.

- ✓ While day-to-day instruction will be winding down, summer assignments will be provided. In most cases, there will be some choice and flexibility in what is to be completed. We also know that summer is a great time for all readers—whether your child is the kind of reader who has a stack of books ready to devour the minute school is out, or the kind of reader who needs some extra time and encouragement to find the right book.

The research on the habits of successful students tells us that children who read during the summer enter school in September ready for the challenges of their new grade. Even more interesting is the fact that it doesn't matter what they read—easy books, books that they've already read, fiction, non-fiction of all kinds, comic books, newspapers, magazines—just as long as they spend a chunk of time each day reading for pleasure.

- ✓ While our students have not even begun summer vacation, we have started meeting to plan for September 2020 school opening. A task force has been created to begin discussing how to proceed in the fall. While all final determinations will be predicated on New York City, New York State, Federal and CDC mandates, the task force has been researching how countries around the globe have been moving into the next phase of normalcy, as well as developing strategies to continue with distance learning, planning for a modified return, or if a school would be able to open at 100%, what systems would need to put into place. As we move forward, information will continue to be shared. It is our goal to fully re-open the Catholic Academies and Parish Schools within the Diocese of Brooklyn in September 2020.

We will continue to provide you with updates from the Diocesan Level as more information becomes available to us. In the interim, please continue to be in constant contact with the leadership of your Catholic Academy and Parish School.

I ask that you continue to pray for peace using the words found in the Prayer of St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

Continued prayers for you, your family!

Sincerely,

Thomas Chadzutko

Thomas Chadzutko, Ed.D.
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