



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Nascantur in Admiratione

"Let Them Be Born in Wonder."

April 2, 2020

Dear St. Thomas Parents~

With Governor Whitmer's [executive order](#) issued this morning, St. Thomas School will remain closed for the remainder of the scheduled school year. This is such a heartache for all of us. However, during this period of closure, we will continue to care for and lead our Kindergarten through 8th grade students in their learning which we previously planned for this period via online instruction. We will continue to develop alternative plans for related educational activities through the rest of the school year as needed (for example, 8th grade graduation.) Please see the attached memo from Mr. Tom Maloney, Diocese of Lansing Superintendent of Schools, in regard to the school closing order.

In our current circumstances, Fr. Bill has been called to carry out the very difficult task of addressing the new financial realities of our parish, addressing the need to 'make ends meet' as we are no longer able to gather as a parish community. The current disconnect between our budgeted income and new actuals have required significant, temporary modifications in staffing and services across all parish ministries. Those services requiring personal contact have been temporarily suspended including our preschool ministry. (Through Fr. Bill's commitment to continue insurance coverage, unemployment benefits, and the COVID Stimulus Program, all staff members will remain financially whole.)

Our Kindergarten through 8th grade educational ministry will remain fully funded. The continued support of our school community through tuition payments is key to our being able to do so—thank you for your continued financial partnership through the remainder of the year. We do understand that the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted our families' financial circumstances. In recognition of this reality the Diocese of Lansing has established a modest Emergency Tuition Fund for payment of 2019-2020 tuition balances. If you are in these circumstances, please email our parish business manager, [Mrs. Kathy Grisdela](#), to apply for this funding—funding requests need to be submitted by Wednesday, April 8th.

Next week, parents and students will be provided details on the organization of our learning program for the Boniface Term. This will include a weekly schedule of online lessons by class, which is adopted to establish a fixed and balanced schedule of daily student work, taking into account student workload guidelines provided by the Diocesan Education Department. (These guidelines are intended to respect the realities our families are adapting to in having learning take place in the home

setting and will also be provided next week.) Information will also be provided in regard to grading practices, assignments, etc. We are all very grateful to our teachers, for the work entailed in advancing our students' learning by online means, and we are also so grateful to our parents for this new degree of partnership that 'school at home' has called us to.

As we seek to respond to this unprecedented national emergency we are all being required to carry a great deal of responsibility as parents--as you manage your emergency home and work circumstances, as educators--as we seek to continue to fulfill our professional responsibility to advance your children's learning, and as leaders—as we serve the community in managing the unique organizational challenges we all face at this time. This will be a test of faith and perseverance for all of us—may charity and wisdom guide all our efforts and lead us through this time.

Our current schedule:

- **Monday, April 6 – Wednesday, April 8:** Daily Distance Learning
- **Thursday, April 9 – Monday, April 13:** Easter Triduum/No Distance Learning
- **Tuesday, April 14:** Return to School/Scholastica Term Report Cards Available Online

Faculty Update

Our first grade classroom teacher, Mrs. Marie Kelly, has announced that she and her husband will be moving to Boston this summer as he pursues his MBA at Harvard University. Mrs. Kelly has been a key contributor of the classical Catholic culture of learning and faith that we have established at St. Thomas these past two years. Her commitment, talent and kindness will be missed by all of us—she will be a blessing to more children next year as she seeks a position in a Catholic school in the Boston area for the fall. Thank you Mrs. Kelly for your witness of faith, hope and love—and for all your work in leading your students to so excel in all their learning!





'School at Home' takes place indoors and out as the Johnson's make a pilgrimage to pray, Lucy Atzinger listens to Mr. Pietryga guide her through her writing lesson, and Jackson Huber listens intently to Mrs. Kelly's online lesson.



Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. Watch Fr. Mark Rutherford, pastor of St. Mary's in Williamston and uncle of Francis, Benedict, Joseph and Isadore Rutherford, bless the diocese in Eucharistic Procession from the air.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=104&v=jMp9aCQZP2A&feature=emb_logo

Pandemic: A Poem

What if you thought of it as the Jews consider the Sabbath –
the most sacred of times?

Cease from travel.

Cease from buying and selling.

Give up, just for now, on trying to make the world
different than it is.

Sing. Pray. Touch only those to whom you commit your life.

And when your body has become still,
reach out with your heart.

Know that we are connected
in ways that are terrifying and beautiful.
(You could hardly deny it now.)

Know that our lives are in one another's hands.
(Surely, that has become clear.)

Do not reach out your hands.

Reach out your heart.

Reach out your words.

Reach out all the tendrils of compassion that move, invisibly,
where we cannot touch.

Promise this world your life –
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
so long as we all shall live.

Lynn Ungar 3/11/2020

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