



July 20, 2020

Dear Catholic school parents and families,

Peace in Christ.

We are excited to welcome you and your children back to Catholic schools this fall! In this letter, we would like to provide you with an update on the important progress that Catholic schools of the Archdiocese are making towards our goal of safely reopening Catholic school buildings for in-person learning at the start of the 2020-21 school year. This progress is marked by the incredible contributions of Catholic school leaders from across the 12 counties of the Archdiocese and the help of experts in many fields. Our goal is simple: partnering with you to provide your children with a Catholic education in the best possible and safest way that we can.

The last five months have taught us of the need for vigilance and flexibility in confronting COVID-19. We know from our experience in Catholic education that the best way of teaching our students is through in-person instruction in our Catholic school communities. The benefit of in-person instruction is irreplaceable. We also know that we must partner with you to do this safely for our kids and for our community. Over the last five months we have learned that with a careful approach to health and safety, together as a vigilant community, we can mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Our success requires all of us to be rowing together in the same direction.

As we told you in our last letter, in June we started the Catholic Schools Task Force to bring together expertise in finance, communications, law, public health and mental health with the goal of safely returning to in-person learning. At the beginning of July, the Task Force published a series of required health and safety protocols for Catholic schools. In collaboration with stakeholders, and with careful consideration for the latest public health recommendations, each Catholic school is currently implementing this special set of procedures to 1) continue providing a quality Catholic education for all students 2) mitigate the risk of the spread of disease and 3) build a culture of health and safety. As these comprehensive plans

are developed and implemented, they will remain flexible enough to respond to the changing impact of COVID-19 on the local community.

There are numerous factors that went into our decision to prioritize the reopening of Catholic school buildings this fall. As we continue to assess this decision, one important point of information is the mounting scientific evidence regarding COVID-19 in children and adolescents. We encourage every family to remain informed about what our scientific community is learning about COVID-19 and risks for children and adolescents. Keeping our schools healthy requires that every family do its part through careful attention to the vigilance that the CDC is encouraging for all Americans. In particular, it will be important to keep children who are sick home from school, to avoid unnecessary opportunities for exposure outside of school, and to practice social distancing when out in the broader community. Together, families and schools can work to meet the goals of the protocols for health and safety in Catholic schools. This expression of solidarity shows our love for neighbor, which is a powerful lesson for our children and adolescents.

As discussion on public school reopening continues to spark across the state and country, we are mindful that our Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis are responsible for making prudent decisions for the good of the children and families they serve and remain accountable to our community. We are proud of our Catholic school leaders' ability to work collaboratively with stakeholders and exhibit wisdom and charity as they balance multiple data points in planning for the 2020-21 school year. Together with you, we are preparing for what may be a unique and challenging school year. This is an opportunity for us to focus together on patience and flexibility as we remain focused on our goal of providing an excellent Catholic education for every student served by Catholic schools. Only together will we be able to overcome the challenges and continue to form and educate your sons and daughters. They are counting on all of us.

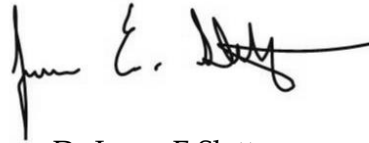
In the upcoming weeks, you will be making important educational decisions for your children based on a multitude of considerations. We thank you for continuing to partner with us to cultivate educational excellence. Enrollments for the 2020-21 school year are looking strong. In the weeks ahead, we encourage you to watch for communications from your Catholic school to learn about specific actions in place to help keep our Catholic school children, employees and community healthy.

Be assured of our prayers for you and gratitude for your support of Catholic education.

Sincerely in Christ,

Handwritten signature of Andrew H. Cozzens in black ink, starting with a cross symbol.

Most Reverend Andrew H Cozzens
Auxiliary Bishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
Vicar for Education

Handwritten signature of Jason E. Slattery in black ink.

Dr Jason E Slattery
Director of Catholic Education

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