



December 10, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

On Friday, March 13, 2020, students, faculty, and staff left school with the thought that they would experience a two-week quarantine to overcome the Coronavirus that had an outbreak in the United States. Little did any of us know what we would endure as next week marks nine months that we have lived through this virus and its challenges. Currently, we are in a “surge” of this virus and, as some have described, the return from the Thanksgiving break created a “surge upon a surge.” While hope remains before us as a vaccine for the virus begins distribution, the upcoming Christmas break, beginning at the close of the school day on Friday, December 18, poses another threat to health and safety, if we do not adhere to COVID-compliant behaviors.

As of today our COVID-positive statistics for our 19 parish and diocesan schools since September 1 are as follows:

111 student cases out of 6027 students
16 staff cases out of 786 staff members

109 cases in the 14 schools in Delaware
18 cases in the five schools on Maryland’s Eastern Shore

All cases have been in the mild to moderate range.
School transmissions have not occurred; transmissions have occurred outside of schools.

When we reported to you one month ago, our total number of students and staff who had contracted COVID since September 1 was 58. In one month’s time the caseload has more than doubled in number. We are concerned that the Christmas break will result in even a greater number of COVID-positive cases.

Therefore, to mitigate the situation to some degree, parish and diocesan schools will be in session virtually the week of January 4-8. Specific directives for your child(ren)’s school(s) will be provided by the school administration. Students will participate in virtual learning more attentively if 1) they are dressed each day as a student in the uniform recommended by the school administration and 2) if you designate a work space for them at a table or desk. There will, of course, be breaks provided for them during the school day and the opportunity for movement.

We believe this virtual week of learning will provide an opportunity for mitigating the spread of COVID, if families truly quarantine. We count on your support of this endeavor. We understand the challenges that present themselves arranging childcare of younger children, but hope this advance notice provides you the time to make such arrangements. We truly need everyone's support, if this quarantine will be effective.

We also rely on your full cooperation over the Christmas break with the four COVID-compliant behaviors we have reinforced since September 1.

- Wearing masks at all times out of the home
- Watching distance from others when out of the home
- Washing or sanitizing hands regularly throughout the day
- Wellness checks daily to address any health changes immediately

Together, and with the advent of a vaccine underway, we shall overcome this challenge.

Before closing, allow me to join Bishop Malooly in expressing gratitude for all you are doing to support Catholic education in these trying times. You are truly providing your child(ren) a gift for this life and the next life that will outlast any wrapped package found under your Christmas tree. Be assured of Bishop's prayers for your family as we conclude Advent and celebrate the incarnation of our Savior.

This upcoming Sunday we light the third candle on our Advent wreath. It is the candle of joy and its pink color serves to remind us of hope. As Christians, we have remained people of hope throughout the centuries with our feet planted in the here and now but our vision focused on our destiny as saints. Let us renew our commitment to hope at Mass this weekend.

May you and your family make the last two weeks of Advent meaningful spiritual preparation for the celebration of Christmas and enjoy a happy, healthy, and holy Christmas and start to 2021.

Sincerely,

Louis P. De Angelo

Louis P. De Angelo, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools