August 2020

Dear Catholic School Parents/Guardians and Community Members:

We are looking forward to having the opportunity to welcome students as we begin the 2020-2021 school year in September. While it has been a difficult year for our local, national and global communities addressing the challenges of COVID-19, we remain committed to providing the best possible Catholic educational learning experiences for our students.

I am very happy to share that students who attend any of our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Syracuse will have the opportunity to engage in programs that provide in-person learning, five days a week, while still following state and federal social distancing guidelines. Being able to come together to provide supportive environments for learning is our priority at each of our Catholic schools. Each school has prepared a 2020-2021 School Reopening Plan that outlines the processes and strategies in place to support a safe and high quality learning environment to which our students, faculties and staff have become accustomed.

Our school plans incorporate guidance from the New York State Department of Health, the New York State Education Department, the Catholic Conference and our Catholic School Office in the Diocese of Syracuse. Each plan seeks to ensure best practices for preventing the spread of the novel coronavirus. They address our students’ educational needs under three models of instruction: in-person, remote, and a hybrid of the two, when necessary. Each plan reflects our commitment to the success of students of all abilities and backgrounds in meeting New York State Learning Standards. Most importantly, we focus on other essential needs of our children, including their social-emotional wellness, access to and skill building in the use of technology, and, of course, their faith formation.

I would like to thank our administrative leaders, faculty and staff members, parents, guardians, students and members of the greater CNY communities who contributed to the reopening efforts for the 22 Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Syracuse. I would also like to offer a special thank you to our Catholic school teachers who are heroic in their commitment and dedication to the students and families in our school communities.

In these last few weeks before the start of the 2020-2021 school year, we will continue to prayerfully and deliberately implement the plans outlined in these documents. We will be moving furniture,
posting signs, training staff, preparing lessons, cleaning surfaces, and communicating with our families and other stakeholders about the new procedures that will be in place as we commence this unique and unprecedented school year.

**Catholic Schools Strong** - together, we can successfully support the educational needs of our students in the Diocese of Syracuse while still making progress, as a local and global community, to defeat this pandemic.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

[Signature]

William W. Crist

“This new situation brings us back to the core of our faith and invites us to trust in God.” From: A Letter From Jerusalem - Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa, apostolic administrator of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem