Dear Friends,

Saint Ignatius of Loyola had a great desire to be a heroic soldier. To do so, he knew that he would have to train hard and practice his fighting skills frequently.

During a battle, he was wounded by a cannonball. As he worked to recover from his injuries, he decided that God was calling him to be a great saint. He knew that if he was going to take this new call seriously, he would have to work just as hard to become a saint as he did trying to become a knight.

While he was recovering, Saint Ignatius began to read everything he could about the saints and prayer. He summarized his readings and experience of prayer in a work called “The Spiritual Exercises.” In it are 14 important rules every Christian should follow.

The first two rules talk about the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In the first rule, Saint Ignatius says that if we are living a life of sin and moving away from God, the Holy Spirit pains and nags us in order to get us to turn around. In the second rule, he says that the Holy Spirit is the voice of encouragement for those who are doing God’s will.

In other words, the Holy Spirit acts like a coach. A good coach is honest with us about what we are doing wrong and then points us in the right direction. A good coach helps us grow in areas where we are weak. A good coach cheers us on when we are doing well and are bearing the fruits of our hard work.

During these days of the Church year known as Ordinary Time, where is the Holy Spirit working in our lives? How is God calling for our transformation? How is He calling us to live extraordinary lives, especially during these challenging times?

Peace,

Father John Donia
From the Office of the Secretary of Elementary Education

Strong, Vibrant Learning Continues

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s Elementary Schools continue to face the challenges of COVID and provide face-to-face and virtual learning five days a week to our students. While learning may have looked different, quality education is still taking place every day. Here is a small smattering of the great happenings in our elementary schools.

Martin Luther King Day Celebrated at Drexel Neumann Academy

At Drexel Neumann Academy, the students decorated water bottles with words of encouragement in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The water bottles will be donated to a variety of charities. I’m sure the words, as well as the students’ artwork, will bring smiles to many faces.

A Day of Service at St. Martha School for Martin Luther King Day

As a Catholic School Community and family, we are called to feed the hungry and help the needy. St. Martha School heeded that call head on. The Student Council along with their teachers made over 300 PB&J sandwiches on Martin Luther King Day. The sandwiches were delivered to Project H.O.M.E.! Project H.O.M.E. distributed the sandwiches to the nearby shelters for those in need. Thank you to Trader Joe’s, the Board of Limited Jurisdiction, parishioners and families who donated materials for the PB&J Food Drive which was a major success. Such an amazing job by all!
Catholic Schools Week

From January 31 to February 6, 2021 Catholic Schools across the country will celebrate Catholic Schools Week. Even with COVID restrictions, schools are working on various activities. Here is a sampling of activities from Holy Rosary School.

- School Family Tree: Each family decorates a leaf with virtues that makes their family special. Large tree with leaves attached will be hung throughout the school
- Prayer Service
- Thank you cards with handwritten messages by students again thanking our Giving Tuesday benefactors- postcards will be mailed. See sample in the picture.
- New Apartment Donations for Local Homeless Shelter
- Beep Out Thank You Salute for Local Police, Firefighters, EMT: Front line people will circle the lot twice in their vehicles as we in cohorts clap, wave pompoms, wave signs of gratitude for their service
- Twin Day for Students, Schoolwide Bingo, teachers write notes to their students
- Paper Kindness quilt made by students and posted in the school
- Future Career Day: Students dress as their future career and tell class about it
- Spiritual Bouquet made for our 4 pastors
- Virtual Talent Show

A Photo/STREAM project for Catholic Schools Week

At St. Laurentius School, the eighth-grade class worked on a STREAM project for Catholic Schools Week. They created a photo essay and display of the Faces of 2020-2021 at St. Laurentius, as the children hone their skills at photography, technology, and Religion with a nod toward St. Veronica, the patron saint of photographers. The children will also be creating the image of Christ on veils as per the St. Veronica story and hopefully these veils will be used at our live streamed Living Stations of the Cross.
**Holy Innocents 6th Graders Make Crystals**

At Holy Innocents School, the 6th grade has been learning about rocks and minerals. Their teacher, Ms. Victoria Ward, had her students create crystals. The solution they used consisted of a 1/2 cup warm water (they found it best with hotter water) 1/2 cup Epsom salt, and some food coloring (optional). All they did was mix the ingredients in a clear glass container, stir to dissolve most of the salt, and place it in the refrigerator for a few hours, overnight worked best. What's occurring is the fast cooling solution became dense with the magnesium sulfate joining together to form crystals. They found that their crystals were thin and fragile and the mixture provided a large quantity with this solution.

**What Are You Going to Do When You Grow Up?**

At Our Lady of Grace School, a Career Day was held in kindergarten. The students had a wonderful day. Our future looks bright in the hands of these boys and girls!

**Inauguration Day a Great Success**

Assumption Academy knew that Wednesday, January 20th was a special day as President Biden took the oath of office as the 46th president of the United States. The young children celebrated inauguration day with prayer, parades, pizza and time watching the President on the screen. It was a Perfectly Patriotic Day.
A Snowman Thematic Unit Brings Smiles at Saint Jerome School

The weather outside may be frightful, but building a snowman is so delightful! Saint Jerome’s first graders constructed snowmen with playdough as part of a sequencing activity. The children then explained how to build a snowman by drawing pictures and writing step-by-step directions. This sequencing activity is part of an extensive snowman thematic unit that includes writing, reading comprehension, mathematics, listening skills, and art.

Saint Francis de Sales School Enjoys Sharing an Update on Their Classes

Saint Francis de Sales School has a wonderful newly remodeled gym. With everything so fresh and new, energy levels are high as you can see in this picture of one their students is having a blast playing basketball in the new setting. This remodel really brings out the excitement in our students, while enjoying their Physical Education activities!

St. Francis de Sales second graders shine bright as they show off their handwriting skills. These students are receiving a special recognition for displaying great effort and diligence. We are so proud of the students at de Sales and the administration and staff love to recognize their hard work!

The de Sales third grade students learn with focus. We see the third-grade class working so attentively in the STEM Lab with our STEM teacher, Mrs. Flynn. Here they explore their critical thinking skills, creativity and problem-solving abilities. Way to go!
Each year, Catholic schools across the nation celebrate the commitment to excellence demonstrated by their teachers; the desire of the school community to grow in the Catholic faith; and the ongoing witness to service as a reflection of God’s love. This year, like no other, has challenged teachers and students alike to formulate learning communities which continue to sustain academic excellence while meeting the emotional needs of the students as they learn in-person while maintaining all of the protocols of COVID safety. We celebrate our teachers and place a spotlight their exceptional lessons.

**Spotlight on:**

**Saint Katherine’s Upper School on the Archbishop Carroll campus**

At Saint Katherine School’s Upper School program, located within Archbishop John Carroll School, the students have been working hard in school and virtually! They have been learning fact vs. opinion, identifying characteristics, and engaging in scavenger hunts. Saint Katherine’s teachers guide their students toward service-learning projects by collecting items and filling backpacks for Saint Francis Inn in Kensington. Students have also been learning single serve recipes they can cook at home!

**Archbishop Carroll teacher: Lorraine Carpenter** (Art Department)

*Mrs. Loraine Carpenter’s* art classes completed a project based on the idea of bees working together for the good of the community and the support and structure that the beehive provides. Students brainstormed who and what were their support systems throughout quarantine and found a way to visually represent those things/people/occupations within the cells of the hive that they created.

All art classes participated in this project. The number of cells required increased for each level, from Art 1 (5 cells) to Art 4 (8 cells), and the 3D students had to incorporate an element of 3 dimensionality in theirs. It was essential that all the cells connect to create one continuous piece representing our community.
Archbishop Ryan teacher: Michael James (Mathematics Department)

Archbishop Ryan Statistics students were working on a collaborative project using the popular gaming app Among Us. With students both in class and at home, the teams had to play several rounds to collect data on the outcome and create extended frequency distribution charts and graphs. Students in class and home, utilized both Zoom, Air pods, Google Apps for mathematics and presentation software. Thanks to Mr. James for making math matter to his students!

Archbishop Wood teacher Dr. Kathy Nobles (Mathematics Department)

Dr. Kathy Nobles has truly embraced the challenge of engaging students learning virtually by incorporating Google Slides plug, “PearDeck.” Students answer questions in real time so that she can formatively assess their learning. Dr. Nobles also utilizes Jamboard, an interactive whiteboard program, so that students can collaborate with each other and Whiteboard.fi, another whiteboard program, so that she can effectively monitor student work during class. Her Zoom chats are full of questions that check for understanding and allow students to ask questions of their teacher. Congratulations!

Bishop McDevitt teacher Annemarie Heaps (Science Department)

Annmarie Heaps, Bishop McDevitt’s Chemistry & Physics teacher and Science Department Chair has also been dubbed McDevitt’s “Schoology Guru”! Mrs. Heaps has tackled hybrid learning and does it well. She has embraced different modes, strategies and tech tools without overwhelming her students. She develops relationships with her students and engages them in the classroom and at home. It doesn’t end there, Ms. Heaps also trains her colleagues and has time to participate in Neumann’s K-12 Online Instruction Endorsement. Heaps of praise for this teacher!

Bishop Shanahan teacher: Mrs. Margaret Cusatis (English Department)

Margaret Cusatis, ELA teacher at Shanahan uses multiple online tools and the power of Schoology to create a dynamic hybrid learning. Mrs. Cusatis provides space for online and in-person learners to collaborate. She utilizes EduFlo for peer-reviewing of student essays, Google Slides for facilitating student brainstorms, and breakout rooms for fostering small group discussion. To effectively provide feedback, Mrs. Cusatis uses the chat function on Zoom and GoGuardian. As a Schoology champion, she also shares her skills and knowledge with other teachers. Bishop Shanahan is proud of Mrs. Cusatis!
Conwell Egan Catholic teacher: Renato Sifoni (World Language Department)

Mr. Renato Sifoni, CEC’s World Language Department Chair, has demonstrated great ideas for hybrid and virtual instruction. Mr. Sifoni bridges the gap of communication in the hybrid model by use of various apps, web-tools, and creativity. Mr. Sifoni has implemented use of Jamboards, Whiteboard.fi, Gimkit, and Bitmoji virtual classrooms. Mr. Sifoni tasks students to relate real-life experiences (ie. COVID-19) using the Spanish language to discuss, to remain safe and cope with the unprecedented circumstances.

Cardinal O’Hara teacher: Mrs. Patricia Bashaar (Mathematics Department)

Mrs. Bashaar has streamlined her instructional strategies, using the traditional SMARTBoard software, SMART Notebook, to create engaging content. She collaborates with others within the SMART Learning Suite and is able to share resources with her colleagues. The students are able to relate to the real-world examples provided in lessons and assignments, and the tips, tricks, and additional study material stored in the course. Mrs. Bashaar's students love learning about solving equations and inequalities in Algebra and working with reasoning and proofs in Geometry.

Father Judge teacher: Mr. Jola Garrett (BCIT Department)

Mr. Garrett’s Google Application class at Father Judge worked in socially distanced groups and breakout rooms on their Entrepreneur Project. Students created their own companies, developed a business plan, delivered a sales pitch on their product, and designed their own company website. Each class enjoyed the excellent logos and presentations of their classmates.

John W. Hallahan teacher: Mr. Timothy Bolen (World Language Department)

Mr. Timothy Bolen, a World Language teacher connects with every student as if they are all sitting in front of him. Mr. Bolen’s students write collaborative stories as a class, using new vocabulary and concepts together. He also has students create and illustrate characters, demonstrating new vocabulary. He encourages the students to stand and act out a vocabulary term as well as hold up hand written signs with the meaning. Throughout his lessons, Mr. Bolen uses many resources including, but not limited to, PearDeck, Google forms, as well as various videos, slides, and images. Mr. Bolen helps his students to master Spanish as he masters the newest technology language apps enriching his students’ learning environment!
**Lansdale Catholic** teacher: **Mrs. Jennifer Cooney** (Mathematics)

*Mrs. Jennifer Cooney* strives to connect students who are learning from home with their classmates in their classroom. Students can be seen engaging in real time mathematics problems. The walls of Mrs. Cooney’s class are not a barrier to learning and exchanging ideas each day.

**Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls** teacher: **Mr. Ralph Purri** (Fine Arts Department)

*Mr. Ralph Purri*, Little Flower’s Vocal teacher has found new ways to keep his students singing. Mr. Purri uses ingenious methods for teaching music online using interactive Google Slides. Students are actually writing music digitally. Mr. Purri gives his students breathing exercises to do at home so that they can hold their notes longer or project farther. The Christmas concert could not be delivered in-person. Undeterred, Mr. Purri put his efforts into a digital concert with all singers in their own Hollywood Squares on Zoom.

**Monsignor Bonner & Archbishop Prendergast** teacher: **Mr. Gerry Luke** (English Department)

*Mr. Luke* uses PearDeck to involve both his online and in-person students to identify information. PearDeck allows teachers to do formative assessment, for both students in class and at home and allows the teacher to share answers. This enables the teacher to understand where all students are in the lesson.

**Pope John Paul II** teacher: **Mrs. Erin Gauntner** (Science Department)

*Mrs. Erin Gauntner* manages the daily challenge of teaching her students in Chemistry, Biology and Environmental Science in the hybrid model. She sees an opportunity for educational creativity and innovation. Embracing multimedia platforms, students are guided to use virtual labs, virtual simulations and dissections. By using Zoom, Loom, Edpuzzle and much more, Ms. Gaunter ensures that her students have all mastered the knowledge needed to be budding scientists.
Roman Catholic High School teacher: Ms. Maggie Canavan

In Ms. Canavan’s Medical/Business Spanish IV class, the culminating project for the Business Semester is "Shark Tank". Students were split up into groups of 4-6 members. Within each group is a pair of business partners, while the rest of the students make up the panel of Sharks. Each group develops their own product idea and they present a business pitch, completely in Spanish, to the Sharks. There is a discussion, just as one would see on the television show "Shark Tank", except Ms. Canavan's students do it in Spanish! The end results were incredible and some partners were lucky enough to make a deal with the Sharks. Bravo!

St. Hubert’s High School for Girls teacher: Mrs. Kathy DiDonato

Mrs. Kathy DiDonato, Theology Department Chair, uses a Virtual Classroom by creating a Bitmoji Classroom to connect to her students with the intended content and assignments for her class. During synchronous learning students have an agenda for the class and link to different activities that Mrs. DiDonato asks students to complete.

SS. John Neumann – Maria Goretti teacher: Mrs. Britney Padgett (Science Department)

Mrs. Britney Padgett uses the Nearpod platform to engage her students enrolled in Advanced Placement Biology in collaborative lessons. Mrs. Padgett skillfully uses the teamwork between students learning in the classroom and students learning remotely. Through her willingness to adapt her teaching methods and make use of cutting-edge technology, Mrs. Padgett has ensured that her students will have every opportunity to succeed.

West Catholic Preparatory teacher: Dr. Ryan Baxter (Engineering)

Congratulations to Dr. Ryan Baxter, recently nominated and selected for the 2020 Axalta All-Pro Teacher. The Philadelphia Eagles and Axalta recognizes outstanding teachers in the tristate area for contributions to students, school and community.
Spotlight Articles

In each edition of the Coronavirus Update, we will provide articles with helpful tips and expert recommendations on social and emotional related issues and concerns.

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<th>Children, Relationships and Resilience</th>
<th>How Teens Can Practice Self-Care</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hardship and difficulty in childhood can have an adverse effect on child development. However, many children flourish despite facing hardships and stress. It is resiliency, which in part, enables this to happen. Research has shown that children with at least one strong, stable, supportive relationship are more likely to overcome adversity. Follow the link below to read more about the role of relationships in resiliency and explore other ways to help children overcome difficulties.</td>
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<td><a href="#">Children Build Resiliency Through Relationships</a></td>
<td><a href="#">How Teenagers Can Protect Their Mental Health During COVID-19</a></td>
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Emergency Contact Information

Click here for a list of [emergency contacts](#) for each of the five counties.