



Catholic Education Coronavirus Taskforce Newsletter

April 30, 2020

Message from Father
Matthew Guckin Director of
Catholic Mission and Identity

My Father's House

Mother's Day, 2020

Dear Parents,

Happy Mother's Day!

Since my own mother's passing in 2011, I can't help but wonder what heaven is like and what she must be experiencing. It has been my experience that it's rare to find Catholics speaking about heaven. Or, if we do, we do so in strictly earthly terms by likening it to whatever we love about this world.

I remember explaining heaven in class one time as a 'place of eternal rest' to which one student responded, "Sounds boring to me!"

In this weekend's Gospel, Jesus refers to heaven as "my Father's *house*." The Gospel was originally written in Greek and the word Jesus uses for "house" is *oikos*. It is a word we often translate as "economy."

Think of a high functioning economy. There are parents parenting, factory workers producing, sanitation workers cleaning, waiters and waitresses serving, managers managing, and so forth. Each person is doing his or her part in building a vibrant economy.

Jesus, by describing heaven as a "house" ... an *oikos* ... is telling us that the Eternal City is a vibrant, dynamic place. Each heavenly citizen places his or her gifts at the service of everyone and, thus, gives glory to God!

I can imagine Saint Monica running the Mother's Club. I can hear Saint Francis of Assisi singing his song of peace in the streets. I can envision Saint Maria Goretti in charge of Youth Group, Saint Patrick teaching with a shamrock, and Saint Therese, the Little Flower, dropping rose petals everywhere!

If you are like me and your mother has gone home to God, I suggest you take a few moments this weekend to reflect on the gifts He gave to her. Use your imagination to envision how she is placing those gifts at the service of others.

I promise you will begin to realize that heaven isn't boring at all. In fact, it's a dynamic place where we'll all want to stay - forever!

God bless you,
Father Matt Guckin
Director, Catholic Mission & Identity

From the Office of the
Secretary of Elementary
Education

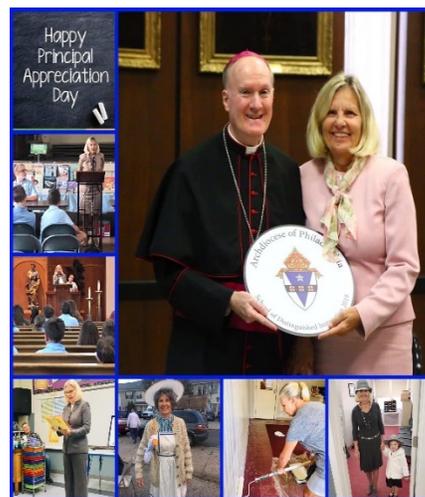
Our Elementary Schools: Communities in Action

Principal Appreciation Day May 1, 2020

Many principals woke up on Friday, May 1st to the sound of numerous texts coming through their cell phones, leaving them to wonder, what was happening. To their surprise, it was National School Principal Appreciation Day. Facebook was flooded with parents, students, and teachers sending notes of thanks to the faithful leaders of the schools who have done so much, especially during the pandemic.



Christ the King School and St. George School created a picture collage to honor their principals, Mr. Tschopp and Dr. Walls. These pictures commemorated the time before social distancing restrictions when schools buildings were open and communities could be together. Meanwhile **St. Monica School** hosted a principal drive by showing their support of to Sister Regina Matulka. Channel 6 news showed Sister Regina dancing in the streets of South Philly while the students and their families rode by.



Bob Kelly, our friend from Fox 29 News posted this banner on his Facebook page with the message, "Can we still send our kids to your office during home school?"



Teacher Appreciation Week May 4 – 8, 2020



The Office of Catholic Education expresses heartfelt gratitude for all of our teachers who are working so hard to provide online distance learning during this unrepresented time. Teachers, we know that not all of you were extensively trained in cyber learning and we know that many of you are working harder than ever. However, you have stepped up to the challenge. Our educators preach the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ every day to our students. Our teachers are the modern-day apostles. We salute you on a ministry well done.

First Communion Day May 2020

Take a minute to reflect back on your First Communion Day. Do you remember your dress or suit? Do you remember the excitement and anticipation that YOU were going to receive Jesus for the first time? Do you remember the wait seeming to be endless? Do you remember how excited your family members were for you? Do you remember feeling holy and very close to Jesus? This year will be different for all those children who would be receiving First Holy Communion because of the necessary postponements. These students may have to wait to receive this sacrament for the first time, but this week, we whisper a prayer for each of them and their families that the desire they have to receive Jesus remains with them throughout their life.

On Saturday, May 2nd, the day of First Communion, the students at **SS Simon and Jude School** dressed up in their communion clothes for a Zoom First Communion special moment along with their pastor, Father Gerlach, their principal, Sister Regina, and their teachers.

*O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine,
All Praise and All Thanksgiving Be Every Moment Thine.*



PreK 4 Students enjoy 1-1 Zoom Meetings with Their Teacher

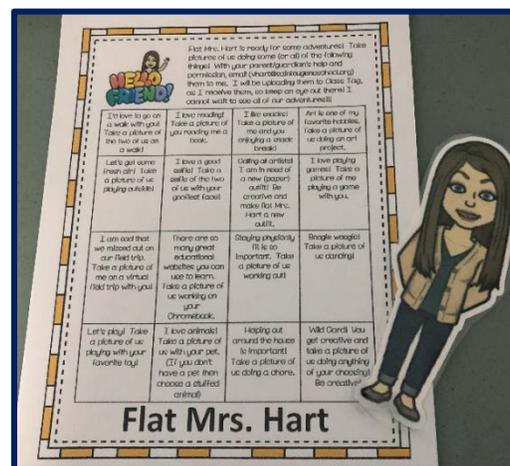
Janell Lamperti, PreK 4 teacher at **St. Mary Catholic School**, surveyed her parents asking how things were going for their children during this time. Based on parent feedback she discovered that the Zoom meetings she was holding with her 20 students ended up being loud and overwhelming to some. Ms. Lamperti then set up a spreadsheet and gave parents the option to sign up for an individual meeting instead. Out of 20 children in the class 18 parents have opted to sign-up for one-on-ones.



During the meetings Mrs. Lamperti and the child prayed together, read books, played a game called alphabet soup or did a scavenger hunt together. The meeting proved positive for the students and the teacher. PreK students have such a connection with the teachers and school. In person classes ending as abruptly as they did has been very hard for them. These individual Zoom sessions have maintained a connection while continuing to work on skills while having fun together. One parent told the teacher that her daughter was up extra early, and although she normally does not want to get out of her pajamas, she put on a dress, put on lip gloss and was waiting for Mrs. Lamperti in front of the computer for an hour.

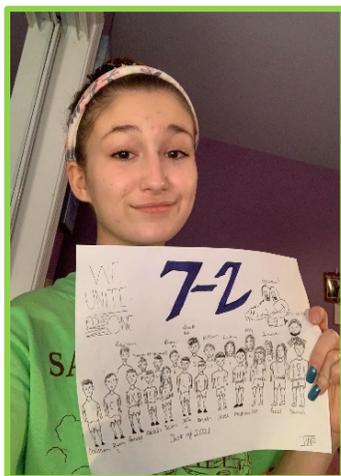
Flat Mrs. Hart

In September, **St. Eugene's** second grade teacher, Mrs. Valerie Hart, introduced class pet, Fiona the Flamingo. Each week Fiona went home with one student and that student would journal about their time with her. When she returned, the class would share her adventures. Due to COVID-19, Fiona and Mrs. Hart are quarantined from the students. So Mrs. Hart introduced them to Flat Mrs. Hart. Mrs. Hart provided the children with a choice board of activities to do with Flat Mrs. Hart, which included "read a book to her," "have her help with a chore," or even "take a selfie with her." Mrs. Hart hopes that the students enjoy a laugh while they do this creative activity.



One School Shares Their Distance Learning

St. Albert the Great School continues with distance learning and recorded lessons, and the faculty have been engaging students with new ideas for activities and having fun. Students celebrated Earth Day by cleaning up their yard or street, planting some flowers or playing a Nature Bingo. In addition, the art teacher incorporated Earth Day into her teaching about drawing with shapes by asking the students to use recycled cardboard to make their own special shapes.



The annual Gator Walk fundraiser was an "At Home Edition" this year with students wearing their Gator Walk shirts, making signs and walking outside with their families.



Also, this week the PreK teachers hosted a nighttime Pajama Party. They had a live party over Zoom where they wore their PJs and shared their favorite stuffed animals. There were magic tricks and the music even led a sign along. To end the party, a bedtime story was read to have the children settle down and get ready for bed.

Decorating Doors in Honor of Mary

The first-grade students at **Notre Dame de Lourdes School** decorated their front windows to get their hearts ready for Mary and the month of May. The lesson incorporated Religion and a socially distant May Procession to honor Mary. One little girl posed as Mary herself in the window.



From the Office of the
Superintendent of Secondary
Schools

Creative and Impactful Approaches to Teaching



Each week our secondary school teachers continue to amaze us as they perfect the art and science of teaching in a virtual world. With a sense of adventure, these teachers develop lessons which help to drive the curriculum while engaging their students in responding to their new reality of learning from home during a national pandemic. Below we share a sampling of lessons. However, they by no means capture the full depth and breadth of our teachers' talents. While not on the front lines of the health care and essential services workers, the teachers of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Catholic schools would surely appreciate a shout out of thanks for their commitment to sustain our students during this most difficult time.

Please enjoy this sampling of model lessons highlighted below.

***An amazing gold star lesson from Conwell Eagan Catholic High School
Surrealist art lesson from art teacher Melissa Schiavone***



How does the mind process a situation that is beyond the parameters of what was considered to be 'real' life'? Teenagers, when asked how they are dealing with Covid-19, will undoubtedly say something like "fine" or "I hate it" because it's difficult to process the numerous and conflicting emotions surrounding the situation. The Surrealist movement in art, always a high school favorite, seeks to unleash the unconscious mind in order to spur creative thought. The students at CEC were asked to reflect on their lives at the moment. What is their new reality?

To help students access their unconscious feelings about the situation they were guided through some Surrealist exercises like recording dreams, free association, automatic writing, and random word generators, which the Surrealists would find to be less than truly random. The students were then asked to sift through those ideas and create a visual representation of their own unconscious feelings about Covid-19, such as, the loss of senior year milestones, and the isolation of social distancing. Through this project the students were able to identify their feelings and synthesize those emotions into visual symbols using the aesthetic and conceptual philosophy of the Surrealist movement.

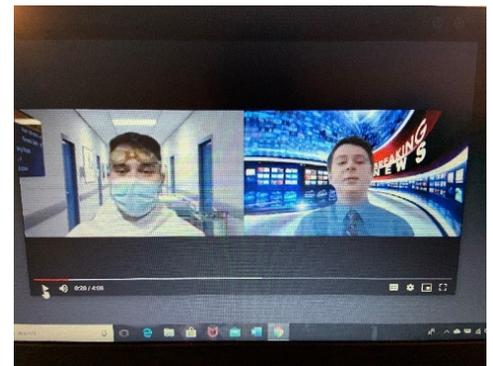
The attached hyperlink is a compilation of all student work for this assignment. It will amaze you.

[CEC Art Video April2020.mp4](#)

***A wow of a gold star lesson from Roman Catholic High School.
Ms. Canavan's Honors Medical/Business Spanish Class***

In Ms. Canavan's Honors Medical/Business course, students were given the task of creating a video addressing the following prompt: "Imagine you are a doctor or nurse working through the COVID-19 pandemic in a hospital in our area. Describe your experiences and include the medical vocab terms we have been using in class."

Seniors, John Nori and Rawad AlBarouki, went above and beyond for this assignment. They decided to work together and created a Zoom interview between a news anchor and a doctor working through COVID-19 using the required vocabulary.



A message of Hope is the order of the day at Bishop Shanahan

A very proud Mrs. Mary Beth Kilpatrick noted about her Choral Ensemble students, "Sometimes it's hard to cling to hope, but what the Liturgical Ensemble produced together is certainly a reminder of it." Mrs. Kilpatrick is so proud of her students and their talent development in an online environment. Ten of her Seniors participated in the video, which was edited by Dan Hellerman the class of 2006. It would have been impossible without his help!

[Final-BSHS-Liturgical-Ensemble-V2.mp4](#)



Each May, Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia celebrate our Blessed Mother Mary. These time-honored traditions include a May crowning, special hymns, and prayers to the Blessed Mother. Schools often take the time to remember that May is time to celebrate and thank our own dear Mothers. Some schools have shared their planning.

At **Father Judge High School**, Rev. Jack Kolodziej, OSFS will celebrate Mass on Mother's Day in the Oblate Chapel for Father Judge Mothers. The school will stream live on Facebook beginning at 11:00 a.m. Please join us as we pray for and celebrate all [#JudgeMoms](#), but especially the mothers of the Class of 2020.



At **Little Flower High School**, the rosary will be prayed on the five Fridays in May and the teachers will incorporate Marian prayers into the morning and evening prayer. The students participated in the Re-consecration prayer on Friday, May 1. Father Joseph McCaffrey will incorporate elements of school Marian Prayer and a Crowning of Mary into the school's Friday Rosary gathering on May 8.

The Schools of Special Education



The students in the AOP Schools of Special Education possess hearts filled with great love. This quality has been most evident during this national health pandemic. In each of the Special Education Schools, the students, their parents and teachers have taken the time to express gratitude and to make the world a gentler place through messages and activities.

Our Lady of Confidence School

With assistance from their parents and teachers, the students of Our Lady of Confidence School have found many different ways to express gratitude to Essential Workers who place themselves on the front lines of the Coronavirus fight each day. This hyperlink video will bring great joy to the viewer. Please consider sharing with essential workers whom you may know and tell them that the students of OLC say thanks. Enjoy this video! <https://youtu.be/6KFM6oQzNYg>

Saint Katherine's School



Each year on April 22nd our nation celebrates Earth Day as a means to bring the message of care for our Earth and all living things, and the need to love and restore the plants and trees so essential to our environment. Though at home learning, this message was not lost on the students of St. Katherine's School.

St. Katherine's student Juanita not only is practicing science and gardening skills but also celebrating Earth Day. This student is planting Zinnia seeds with loving care. We are thankful to Juanita for her contribution to celebrating Earth Day.

St. Lucy – Archbishop Ryan School

As we celebrate National Teacher Appreciation Week, the students of Archbishop Ryan Academy and St. Lucy Day School have used Facebook to express gratitude to their teachers for supporting them during this time of online learning.



AOP Sports News

Spring Sports Senior Recognition Days

Each of the 17 high schools of the Archdiocese enjoyed a Spring Sports Senior Recognition Day to celebrate the senior student-athletes in a small way. Overall, 584 senior student-athletes were acknowledged on www.aopathletics.org. [Click here](#) for a complete listing from the 17 schools. The pictures below are from the 2019 season.



Bishop Shanahan Alum Signs Pro Football Contract

Following the 2020 NFL Draft, the Jacksonville Jaguars announced the signing of free agent defensive tackle Doug Costin, a 2016 graduate of Bishop Shanahan. Costin was a two-time All-Mid-American Conference selection and compiled 58 tackles, 12.0 tackles for loss and four sacks in 2019 while helping Miami (OH) secure its first league title since 2010.



For his collegiate career, Costin played in 50 games, recording 178 tackles, 16.5 sacks, 32.5 tackles for loss, 12 pass breakups and three forced fumbles.

Tell Us Your Stories

For the last seven weeks, we have been sharing stories of how the schools have responded during this crisis. Now we would like to hear from you! If you have an inspirational story about your school, please send it to us at covid19@archphia-oce.org. We would love to publish your Good News about Catholic Education.