



August 6, 2020

The Transfiguration of the Lord

Dear Friends,

In February, watchers wonder how much more cold winter they should expect and look to Punxsutawney Phil for the answer. Similarly, in August 2020, I wonder whether COVID season is nearly behind us, or will there be many more months of disruption. Such is our lot to plan yet not know the future.

I wrote to you first in early April at the pandemic's onset, and then again in late May as its full effects were felt. Now, our efforts are squarely focused on a safe and full return to school, with the prayer that the 2020-2021 school year will see a return to the vibrancy of school life.

[Read Community Letter #1 \(April 7, 2020\)](#)

[Read Community Letter #2 \(May 23, 2020\)](#)

Despite the day's uncertainty, I am proud -- exceedingly -- of our faculty, staff, students, and families who rallied and have shown throughout the great strength of our school. We celebrated this strength Monday when Bishop da Cunha conferred diplomas as part of the delayed-but-not-denied [JP II Class of 2020 Commencement Exercises](#).

Below, I provide you an additional 'status report' of current adjustments and plans.

Full Return to School

In June and July, the Commonwealth's Department of Education released guidelines under which students can safely return to school. One received, the JP II/SFXP team began implementation of the guidelines through building improvements, enhanced technology resources, new procedures, and physical space adjustments. Our two top priorities are to provide a safe environment for students, staff, and visitors where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is minimized, and to organize school time and space so that students will be in-person with their teachers. **I am pleased to say that, barring an unforeseen reversal of positive COVID-19 trends, all JP II & SFXP students**

can return to school every day.

Since the Commonwealth released its school reopening guidelines, there has been significant discussion -- and some objections - to school reopenings. Yet our plan fits comfortably within guidelines for safe return, and we are diligently making preparations to ensure student and staff safety. You would be proud not only of how students, families, and staff members responded in the outset but also by their commitment to return to school. In my opinion, Catholic schools in general and St. John Paul II High School & St. Francis Xavier Preparatory School, in particular, are setting a high standard of flexibility and determination in the face of this crisis.

In August, teachers will dedicate one full week of summer work time developing our in-person technology model (enabling remote-in ability for families choosing to stay home or ill students required to stay home) and re-designing our fully remote model, should circumstances force closure again during the 2020-2021 school year. Teachers are working hard, and this COVID season has revealed the genuine commitment to education felt across the board in the JP II & SFXP community.

Keeping the Faith

In May, as the full economic impact became known, committed Catholic school families realized that they could not keep their children at JP II/SFXP due to financial hardship. In response, the school launched the *Keeping the Faith* Fund, a special, limited-term Fund designed to provide emergency assistance to current and accepted students severely affected by COVID-19 economic hardship. This Fund requires the school to dig more deeply into endowment resources. Yet our commitment is that no student be forced to leave JP II & SFXP due to the fallout of COVID-19, and we sought to meet the challenge with aggressive assistance to deserving families. We call it ‘Keeping the Faith’ because families have kept faith with us, and with this Fund, we have kept faith with them.

Currently, the Fund has awarded \$261,000 of additional emergency financial aid to current and accepted families. This assistance has enabled enrollment to remain remarkably stable; in fact, including transfer-in students, we expect a modest enrollment increase in Grade 6 through Grade 12.

In May, when launching the Fund, I wrote, “Years from now, let us look back at 2020 and see that the school, its families, and the wider Catholic community met the challenge, kept the faith, and thereby strengthened the Church on Cape Cod. God will not be outdone in generosity.” With God’s help, we are well on our way.

Renewal of Commitment

Nationwide, 148 Catholic schools closed this past year permanently, 100 of which

closed after COVID-19 hit. Gratefully, JPII & SFXP enjoys broad community support and a stable financial position. However, the substantial efforts involved in planning for a full return to school and the extraordinary emergency financial assistance have proven to be a renewal of commitment to our very purpose: Showing young people the fullness of Truth through our Catholic Faith, modeling relationships of respect and compassion, and allowing young people to excel in a safe and structured environment. More than ever, we know why we exist and the value our mission holds for young people.

I hope to write to you in the upcoming months, saying COVID-19 is in our rearview mirror. But whatever the case, your support of Catholic schools makes a big difference.

Please contact me with your comments or questions. If there is anything we can do for you or yours, let me know directly.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Christopher Keavy".

Christopher Keavy

President