



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS

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13 July 2020

Dear Faithful Parents of West Tennessee,

I join with our Catholic Schools Office and Principals, in joyfully announcing that Catholic elementary and secondary schools will resume in-person instruction as planned according to our 2020-2021 academic calendar. St. Mary's, located in Jackson, Tenn., typically aligns its schedule to the schools in Madison County.

As you are aware, our diocese formed a task force in May comprised of health professionals to assist our school leaders in formulating a plan to return to school in a safe and healthy manner. I am pleased to report that this committee has presented their recommendations to our local school leaders and our school leaders are adapting the recommendations to their school. The health and safety recommendations for our schools are based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), State and Local Health Departments and the State Department of Education. The office of Catholic Schools will continue to monitor news from the CDC and guidance from our public health officials and will make adjustments as needed.

There will be changes in school routines and protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our response to this pandemic has been grounded in Catholic social teaching about the common good. Thus, the sound public health principles that we have been observing, including social distancing, masks, diligent personal hygiene, and health checks will all be part of this new reality. Adjustments also have been made to the school calendar to give school administrators greater flexibility to ensure the seamless continuation of education. Each school will communicate with their families on specific plans very soon.

With our Catholic school strengths of family, robust parental involvement, local decision-making and academic and faith formation excellence, I am confident we will continue to form disciples by finding God in all things.

As we transition back to our campuses, keep all who have been impacted by this pandemic in your prayers. Please know of my prayers for you. Thank you for the trust and for our partnership with you in the Christian formation of your child(ren).

I am yours, in the light and love of the Lord,

+ David P. Talley

Most Reverend David P. Talley, M.S.W., J.C.D. Bishop of
Memphis