

**July 23, 2020**

**Dear OLM Catholic School Community:**

**I pray that this finds you and your families healthy and coping with the ever changing dynamics of COVID-19.**

**As you know last Friday Governor Newsom gave directives about campus closures this fall, in counties on the State's watch list. This includes Merced County. The directives were very specific for public and private schools: "schools in counties that are on the watch list are not allowed to open until there is not a rise in cases for 14 days..." However, there is a waiver process through the state that we are applying for to open up with in-person teaching/learning. We do not know how long it will take for the waiver process to go through so we can open our campus. We are hoping only a few weeks. Until then we will continue to work on plans that address various scenarios of on campus instruction and distance learning.**

**The safety of our students and staff are our top priority, and we remain fully committed to providing a quality, Catholic education regardless of any restrictions imposed upon us. I will continue to provide updates as the State and County mandates for schools are continually changing.**

**I have decided to change our start date to August 12. Normally, the second week of August is when we begin, and so I made that change on our calendar. There is an updated calendar on our website. We will have our traditional calendar, but please realize this may change.**

**If we do start with virtual learning the teachers will be teaching from their classrooms on campus. This way they will have everything they need in order to teach our OLM curriculum. Again we will be live streaming and Zooming and it will be more like a regular classroom setting for our students. We are also working on guidelines for on-line learning (similar to classroom rules).**

**Ideally we would like to be back to school in person, however this is out of our control. I also realize virtual learning may be a hardship for some families in regards to childcare. If you will be having a hard time meeting your tuition payment obligations and also providing childcare for your child/children, we will be offering an opportunity for you to apply for a reduction in tuition during the time that we may be distance learning. I am currently working on an application that will be posted by Tuesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>. If you are in need of some help, please fill out the application form for this reduction in tuition.**

**We are also planning a meet and greet for our students and teachers during the week of August 3<sup>rd</sup>. Look for more information about this next week.**

**The good news is that our preschool has been open this summer and will continue to remain open for the new school year.**

**This is a very difficult time, but we must put our faith and trust in God.**

**As always thank you for your continued support as we work through all of this together. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.**

**God Bless You!**

**Mrs. Judy Blackburn**

**P.S. The yearbooks are in and can be picked up next week on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday between the hours of 9:00am-12:00pm!**