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ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

March 15, 2020

Dear Priests and Deacons,

The Archdiocese of St. Louis will close all archdiocesan elementary and high schools—including all grades pre-K through 12--beginning Wednesday March 18th. Pending continuing updates and guidance from local and state government and health officials, we have preliminary plans to resume school on Monday, April 6.

After deep discernment in prayer to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in cooperation with officials, I have decided that closing our schools is the best path forward to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus in our area. Caring for both our physical and spiritual health go hand-in-hand, and the health, safety and overall well-being of the people of the archdiocese is my first priority.

This decision was not made lightly. Along with archdiocesan leadership, I understand that there are challenges ahead for our school communities. Below are some resources that may help you manage those challenges:

- For e-learning needs at your school, please consult the Office of Catholic Education and Formation. Suggested e-learning programs can be found at catholicfaithstl.com.
- For those children and families who depend on our schools for food, assistance can be found through [St. Vincent de Paul of St. Louis, \(314\) 881-6000](http://St. Vincent de Paul of St. Louis, (314) 881-6000) and [Catholic Charities of St. Louis \(314\) 367-5500](http://Catholic Charities of St. Louis (314) 367-5500).
- As we are encouraging e-learning and home-schooling driven by the curriculum of our faculty and teachers, all employees of our schools should continue to be paid without interruption. The Office of Catholic Education and Formation will be sharing additional information regarding personnel guidelines in the coming days.
- All extracurricular activities at the schools should be postponed/canceled, including athletics.

The Archdiocese of St. Louis will continue to support you in the countless challenges that this current situation presents. I am sending a letter to all of our school principals momentarily with pertinent information for them as well. The latest public statements and information from the archdiocese regarding COVID-19 can be found at archstl.org/coronavirus.

The impact of COVID-19 continues to grow every day, and I realize that all of us are greatly concerned about our own personal health, the health of our families, and of others whom we love, and we should be. In light of this and other announcements, our lives are being impacted in ways that most of us could have never imagined. As people of faith, we must continue to pull together to generously support one another.

I ask that the faithful of our archdiocesan school community and the entire Archdiocese of St. Louis join with me as we pray for all those who are ill, all healthcare professionals, and all of those who are working tirelessly to help ensure the safety and health of our community.

In this season of Lent, I ask that we also increase our prayers, fasting, and almsgiving so that the Heavenly Father will continue to pour forth His love, strength, and protection upon us as we move through the challenges and uncertainty brought about by COVID-19. Mary, Health of the Sick and our Mother, pray for us.

Please know that my prayers are with all of you. .

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross and followed by the name "Robert J. Carlson" in a cursive script.

Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson
Archbishop of St. Louis

The Office of Communications and Planning encourages you to monitor the social media accounts of Archbishop Robert J. Carlson, the Archdiocese of St. Louis and the St. Louis Review for the most up to date information regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Archbishop Robert J. Carlson [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

Archdiocese of St. Louis [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)

St. Louis Review [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)