



Catholic Education Coronavirus Taskforce Newsletter

May 21, 2020

Message from Father
Matthew Guckin Director of
Catholic Mission and Identity

Prayer Changes Me

Dear Friends,

This weekend we find ourselves in a "Liturgical Holding Pattern" as we celebrate Sunday Mass in the midst of the first novena - the nine days between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday.

Prayer is the theme of our readings this weekend. In the first reading, from *The Acts Of The Apostles*, we learn that the first "act" of the Apostles and Mary after the Ascension, but before Pentecost was to pray. Jesus prays to the Father in the Gospel for our protection, our unity and our sanctification.

Prayer is something we tend to keep private (though it's best when we pray with others). Yet, prayer is extremely popular. Amazon offers more than 100,000 books on prayer. YouTube has 23 million videos on prayer. And Google this week offered me over 800 MILLION web pages devoted to prayer!

An objection I often hear regarding prayer is this: "There's no reason to pray since there's no way to change God's mind!" I agree. God *is* unchangeable. The reason I pray, however, is that *prayer always changes me*.

Prayer helps me to resist temptation. I'm a weak man and I need to be strengthened and calmed. Prayer gives me both strength and peace.

Prayer connects me to others. I'm forever asking people to pray for me and people are forever asking me to pray for them. Prayer allows me to remain spiritually connected even while we're socially distanced.

And prayer keeps me united with God. Since God IS love, prayer becomes the conduit which helps me *to* love and keeps me *in* love.

Given just how popular prayer - with books and videos and web pages; given all prayer does for me - regarding temptation and staying united with God and others; given ALL this, the only question I'm left with is this - *why don't I do it more often?*

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



With the arrival of end of the 2020 school year, we are pleased to announce that the Sunday 11:00 AM live streamed liturgy celebrated by Archbishop Nelson Pérez will be offered with the following intention:

June 7th Trinity Sunday liturgy will be celebrated of all graduates from kindergarten to college as well as all school students, families, teachers, and administrators as the 2019-2020 academic year draws to a close. We are grateful to the Archbishop for offering this special liturgy as the principal celebrant and homilist.

Please consider joining the 11:00 AM liturgy on this Sunday, which can be accessed through: CatholicPhilly.com, ArchPhila.org and the Archbishop's [Facebook page](#).

From the Office of the
Secretary of Elementary
Education

*Innovative Sharing and Learning in
the Virtual World*

Local Teacher Featured on PBS/WHYY Presenting STEAM Activities


St. Agnes School's first grade teacher, Ms. Shannon Brown, submitted some geometry teaching videos and she is now featured on PBS/WHYY. WHYY is committed to bringing the classroom home to families during this pandemic. Their goal is to bridge the educational gap for students who do not have as much access to resources at this time. Mrs. Brown enjoyed being featured providing mini-lessons not only to students at St. Agnes, but to other students in the local community. The links are posted here and they are well worth watching. The kite video is about seven minutes and the shape video is two minutes.

<https://why.org/why-brings-the-classroom-home/building-a-kite-with-ms-brown/>

<https://why.org/why-brings-the-classroom-home/building-shapes-at-home-with-ms-brown/>

WHYY LEARNING SHORTS


Building a Kite with Ms. Brown



Follow first grade teacher Shannon Brown as she uses the Engineering Design Process and Geometry to build a kite. All you need are straws, yarn and tissue paper to get out and get flying!

WHYY LEARNING SHORTS

Building Shapes at Home with Ms. Brown



Use marshmallows and toothpicks to build shapes and learn geometry with first grade teacher Shannon Brown. Get ready to count your edges and vertices and reward yourself with a snack in the end!

Virtual Learning in All School Activities

At **Our Lady of Grace School**, virtual learning from the classroom led to a virtual Talent Show and a virtual Mother's Day Tea. Families tuned in for the two-hour virtual talent show to enjoy singing, Irish dancing, dog tricks, and science experiments. Moms enjoyed time with their kindergarten students during the virtual Mother's Day tea.



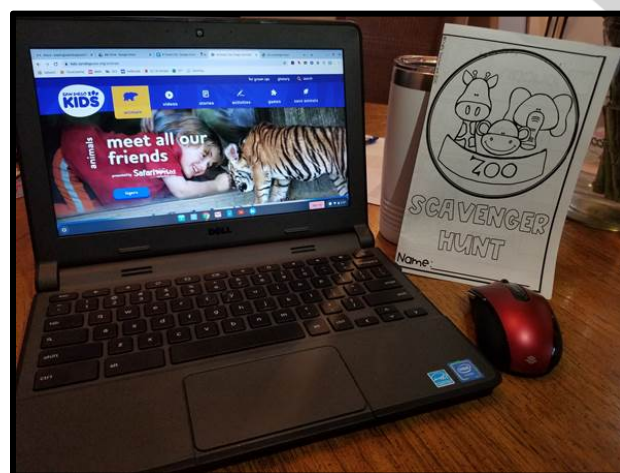
Devotions to Mary Celebrated Throughout the Month of May

Many teachers incorporated lessons to Mary throughout the month of May. At **Nativity School**, the third grade prayed the rosary together on a Zoom lesson. At **St. Laurentius School**, the first grade made Mary Shrines and sent the pictures to their teacher. At **Holy Cross Regional School** students did a variety of Mary projects including making paper flowers and writing Mary stories.



Virtual Field Trip

Mrs. Alexandra Dietz's kindergarten class from **St. Eugene School** was supposed to visit the Philadelphia Zoo this Friday. Since they were unable to go, she is planning a virtual field trip! Using screen sharing on Zoom, the students will explore the San Diego Zoo. The students will color the animals in their scavenger hunt book as they learn about them. They'll learn facts, watch videos made by the zookeepers, and even watch the animals live on the zoo's webcams. The students love science and animals, so they're very excited to have a virtual adventure together.



Weekly Creativity Challenges

Mrs. Dietz uses the website Classtag to stay connected to her students and keep everyone feeling like a community. Every week, she posts a challenge for the students to create something with a chosen material. The students may then use that material to create anything their imaginations dream up, and they post them to our page. Mrs. Dietz is thrilled with the amazing creations they have come up with so far! They've used construction paper, Play-Doh, and even had a baking challenge. Next up, pillow and blanket forts!



+ Dear Parents,

Blessings to you and to your families. Ten weeks have passed since Governor Wolf closed the school buildings within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Each week we have shared some aspect of our online learning environment during these challenging days.

At this time, we find ourselves between two great American celebrations. Mothers' Day was celebrated on Sunday, May 10th and Fathers' Day will be celebrated on Sunday, June 21st. It seems most appropriate to thank each of you: Moms and Dads, Grandparents, and Guardians, who have supported and assisted in sustaining your child each and every day especially during this time. We know that it has not been without challenge. Some of our parents work in essential services, particularly in the health care profession, some have had the challenge of working from home while supporting the learning of their own child(ren), some have suffered the anxiety of the closing of a business or loss of income, and some have suffered from being infected with the virus itself. Through all of this you have been offered your very best each day. We stand in admiration of you and personally thank you for all of support each day.

As we prepare to close the school year, our first priority continues to be the health and safety of our school communities. Within the next days, you should be receiving from your local school's leadership team the plan for book collection, locker cleanout, graduation materials and yearbook distribution. Each school has worked hard to develop a personal plan for their students and their campus. Information concerning the viewing of Graduation and Baccalaureate Mass will be sent by the school as well. As part of each graduation ceremony, Archbishop Nelson Perez will address the graduates. We are grateful for the Archbishop's desire to speak to the Class of 2020.

Our second concern is when and how we will be able to reopen our schools. On May 11, 2020, Pennsylvania State Education Secretary Pedro A. Rivera stated he expects schools in Pennsylvania to reopen in the fall of 2020: the process will follow guidance from state and local health officials.

We have begun planning for the fall semester, designed with increased health and safety measures in place. Please be aware that now through July will be critical weeks for us to see how the health of our nation and our region are evolving. We are very eager to bring our students, faculty and staff back together but we will not compromise our priorities of health and safety. The plans we are developing are focused on keeping our AOP school communities safe. We will look to the PA Department of Education guidelines as well as those of the CDC.

We will continue to publish a Corona Task Force Parent Newsletter during the summer months so that you are continuously up-to-date on this most important information.

May God continue to bless each of you!

Sister Maureen L. McDermott, IHM, Ph.D.

AOP Sports News

AOP Well-Represented On Boys' Basketball All-State Team

Twenty boys' basketball standouts representing eight different AOP schools have been named to the 2019-20 Pennsylvania Sportswriters All-State team. In addition, Brendan Stanton of Pope John Paul II earned 4A Coach of the Year distinction. The picture below is from a game earlier in the year.

6A

First-Team

Jalen Duren, Sophomore, Roman

Second-Team

Lynn Greer III, Senior, Roman

Justice Williams, Sophomore, Roman

5A

First-Team

Rahsool Diggins, Junior, Archbishop Wood

Second-Team

Aaron Lemon-Warren, Junior, Archbishop Ryan
Gediminas Mokseckas, Senior, Archbishop Ryan

Daeshon Shepperd, Junior, Archbishop Wood
Jaylen Stinson, Junior, Archbishop Wood

Third-Team

Marcus Randolph, Junior, Archbishop Wood

4A

First-Team

Tyreese Watson, Junior, Bonner & Prendie

John Camden, Junior, Archbishop Carroll



Third-Team

Justin Green, Junior, Pope John Paul II

Drew McKeon, Senior, Pope John Paul II

Donovan Rodriguez, Senior, Bonner & Prendie

4A Coach of the Year: Brendan Stanton, Pope John Paul II

3A

First-Team

Jordan Hall, Senior, Neumann-Goretti

Jamil Manigo, Senior, Bishop McDevitt

Robert Smith, Senior, Bishop McDevitt

Second-Team

Hakim Byrd, Senior, Neumann-Goretti

Cameron Young, Senior, Neumann-Goretti

Third-Team

Hysier Miller, Junior, Neumann-Goretti

Seven AOP Wrestling Student-Athletes Earn Academic Honors

Seven AOP wrestling student-athletes have been named to the prestigious 2020 Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches Association (PWCA) All-Academic Team. The picture below was taken this winter.

First-Team

Eamonn Logue, Senior, Father Judge

Second-Team

Sean Logue, Sophomore, Father Judge
Jonathan Swift, Senior, Archbishop Ryan

Third-Team

Matthew Weinberg, Senior, Archbishop Ryan

Honorable Mention

Matt Kidwell, Senior, Father Judge
Nicholas Marchesano, Senior, Archbishop Ryan
Brenden Spicer, Senior, Father Judge

