



March 18, 2020

Dear Fathers and Catholic School Leaders,

Peace in Christ.

We write to you about a spiritual response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). In the midst of the fear and worry that is gripping our community, we have an opportunity to help our students and families turn toward the Lord and seek the relief that only he can provide. We have a chance to remind our people of the pilgrim nature of our Church, and to teach, especially our youth, that our lives belong to the Lord and we depend on him both in life and death. Additionally, we have an opportunity to act in solidarity through our united prayers for the sick, for those who care for the sick, for those who are alone, for the dead, and for the deliverance of the human family in all parts of the world from sickness and evil.

Throughout the ages, faced with all manner of illness and calamities, believers have petitioned for God's grace and assistance through litanies. The prayers of children, in their purity of heart and faith, are especially powerful and a great spiritual strength. A litany is a prayer that we can offer when we are alone, at home together with family, or gathered as a virtual community. Simply joining in a litany to call upon the name of the Lord and invoke the help of our holy patrons and the Blessed Virgin Mary reminds us that no matter how afraid we might feel, we are never really alone.

We also want to use this providential opportunity to teach our young people about the importance of prayer. Through prayer, even in difficult moments, we can remain in relationship with God and realize that we are not alone. Prayer is action of the most powerful kind because it invokes the help of the most powerful being--God, the only one who can truly help and save us. While his answer to our prayers may not always be according to our desires, it is always according to his plans. The challenges that we face in the world, especially with the uncertainty of the present moment, call us to prayer. No matter our age, we are never too young to pray. Our students and families, who so often feel helpless in the face of these struggles and fears, can be given real spiritual tools through our help as leaders and teachers.

Therefore, we are inviting you and the young people from our Catholic schools to face the challenges of the present moment together through prayer. It is an invitation to unite before the Lord to seek his help and protection. How much more important this unity has become with our schools closing this week and students being sent home.

In particular, we are asking that every Catholic school in the twelve-county territory of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis send this litany and letter to every employee and school family, urging them to join us in praying the attached *Litany in Time of Need* at 11:05 a.m. each day. We invite you to tune in to Relevant Radio, 1330AM or www.relevantradio.com, where the litany will be broadcast each day at 11:05 a.m. What a wonderful sign of unity it will be to have all our young people from our Catholic schools praying together at the same time for protection and help.

Please begin this devotion on Thursday, March 19, 2020, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Guardian of the Holy Family and Protector of the Church, setting aside these five minutes to join us in prayer until these issues subside. Please note that the document is designed to be photocopied at your school and distributed to teachers and students, which may still be possible if you are sending materials to families. Alternatively, it can be sent to families in your electronic communications.

We will also be inviting other parishioners, families with children in our parish religious education programs, and Catholics in the Archdiocese to join in prayer together with our school children.

With gratitude for your cooperation in this request, and with every best wish and prayer,

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Bernard A Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



Most Reverend Andrew H Cozzens
Auxiliary Bishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

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