



# OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

## ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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MR. MICHAEL J. DEEGAN, SUPERINTENDENT

May 10, 2020  
Mother's Day

*"Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness."* – Proverbs 31:25-28

Dear Catholic School Community,

As always, I pray you and your loved ones are healthy and safe. This Sunday we celebrate Mother's Day in very nontraditional ways. Likely, we will only be able to send our love to many of the moms in our lives from a distance, waving into a camera, promising a raincheck for a proper brunch someday soon. In reality, none of us will be thinking about food, it will be the hugs we long for. We love our moms because they have helped us become who we are today!

Over the past weeks we have all been called upon to be brave, patient and calm. Each of us has had to dig deep to find the wherewithal to be creative, resilient and optimistic. Now, who in our lives tends to be the very living definition of each of those qualities? I think you see where I'm going...

Catholic schools, just like our Mother Church, rightfully hold women in great regard, acknowledging the indispensable roles they have played throughout history, in today's society and within our own lives. Our great shepherd Timothy Cardinal Dolan rarely speaks about our schools or his own education without heaping praise upon the sisters who taught him everything knows. He also talks about his mom all the time!

Indeed, the Catholic schools we know today would not exist were it not for the wisdom, knowledge and selfless work of generations of religious women who have populated our schools since the days of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini. All of those women, like the Ursuline Sisters, the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, Sisters of the Divine Compassion and all of their sister religious who provide a maternal presence in society in the image of the Blessed Mother, Mary.

Now, in the age of the coronavirus crisis, school has come into our homes. This, just as everything has come into our homes. At the same time parents are adapting to working from home, children have been attending school at home, and they can't do that on their own. The entire family unit and their routines have been thrown into disarray, while the outside world is gripped in fear and uncertainty.

How do we keep the gloom at bay? How do we make sure the kids complete their lessons while careers are maintained? Like Mary at the foot of Jesus's cross, as others panic, wail and shout, we must be calm. We must be brave and resilient knowing that this too shall pass. We must look to the women in our lives.

As we focus on the dynamic of the home, now more than ever we must remember and honor the thousands of Catholic school parents who cannot work from home because their careers are on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please join me in saying a Hail Mary for all of our parents -especially the mothers- who are doctors, firefighters, nurses, police officers and EMTs. Please also pray for all our parents who are keeping supply lines moving, stocking shelves and proving all the services our society needs to get to the other side of this crisis. God bless them all.

We love you mom. Happy Mother's Day

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Deegan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Mr. Michael J. Deegan  
Superintendent of Schools  
Archdiocese of New York

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