

A message from Fr. Richard C. Hermes, S.J.

April 24, 2020

Governor DeSantis has called for all Florida schools to continue distance learning for the rest of the school year. Therefore, Jesuit will remain in virtual learning through the end of the second semester. For the seniors, this means their last day of virtual classes will be next Thursday, April 30. For underclassmen, the final class day will be Friday, May 15.

There will be no regular exams at the end of this semester. What about the days on the calendar for exams and exam review? Those days will be used to complete missed assignments and projects, or do make-up work or extra-credit work that may be offered in some cases. For the seniors, this period to wrap up the semester, complete school work, and get grades in order, goes from May 1 through May 7; for the underclassmen, it goes from May 18 through May 21.

This, however, does not pertain to AP Exams or final exams for Dual Enrollment. Those students have received information on how those particular exams will proceed. Students in AP courses or signed up for Dual Enrollment should check their emails and canvas for any updates.

For any questions related to academics and the end of the semester, please do not hesitate to contact teachers, grade-level counselors, or Mrs. Pacheco.

Following are a few updates about some important school-wide events:

Graduation has been tentatively moved to June 18 at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts. The **Baccalaureate Mass** would be held in the Chapel of the Holy Cross on June 17. We have back-up dates in July, in

case things do not work out for June. Our goal remains to hold a traditional Jesuit commencement for the class of 2020.

Next Friday, May 1, is **Senior Day**. To help celebrate the seniors and honor their four years, A.J. Karabenick will record his Presidential speech to be sent out that day to the whole student body, along with a few other talks and greetings in honor of the senior class. Additionally, seniors will have the opportunity to drive through campus next Friday, May 1, and pick up custom-made Graduation Yard Signs. The alumni office will have staff available to lend a hand with sign distribution and provide treats for the seniors. Seniors pay close attention to any follow-ups sent about next Friday as well as updates on graduation.

The annual **Awards Assembly**, which had been scheduled for April 27, will now be videotaped in the chapel and sent out to the whole school community in early May. Those seniors and underclassmen receiving awards in academics, arts, service, and leadership will have the opportunity, along with family members, to hear their teachers and moderators describe the award and honor each student in an appropriate way. The actual plaques, medallions, and certificates will be distributed to the student winners at a later date.

The **Junior Ring Mass** will be held on Saturday, August 22, at the beginning of next school year. This will allow the whole faculty, rising seniors, and their families to celebrate together this important milestone of the transition to senior leadership at Jesuit.

Welcome Day for incoming freshmen, normally held in early May, has been moved to Sunday, August 9. Rising juniors and seniors who are Big Brothers should mark their calendars for this important day for our new 9th graders. Finally, the **Pep Rally and Ring Ceremony** for our state champion Wrestling and Soccer teams will be held at the beginning of

next school year on August 11, the date scheduled for our customary half-day known as *Schola Brevis*.

I was reading recently about Winston Churchill's leadership during the very dark days of 1940 and early 1941, when the battle of Britain was being fought in the skies between the German Luftwaffe and the Royal Air Force, a battle that gave way to months of German bombing of central London. Needless to say, especially during the Blitzkrieg bombing of London, citizens were told things that are now familiar to us, like "Take shelter," "Safer at home," and so forth. As he was putting the final touches on one particular speech, Churchill came across the words, "Stay put." He disliked that phrase. It sounded too passive, a phrase unworthy of a heroic people pulling together for the common good, doing their duty, but knowing that it was only a temporary dispensation, and that better days, indeed the best days, still lay ahead. Instead of "Stay put," Churchill preferred to counsel "Stand firm," an encouragement rooted in manly virtue, one more worthy of a noble people.

At this moment, I encourage our Jesuit students in the same way. Stand firm each day. Stand firm in your cooperation with your parents and those guiding you. Stand firm in completing your duties and responsibilities. Stand firm in setting goals and maintaining high standards. Stand firm in your plans for the future. Above all, in the words of the Apostle Paul, "Stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love."