

## **Parent Update April 13, 2020**

Alleluia! Christ has Risen! Alleluia!

I hope you and your family had a wonderful Easter! I was so excited that I didn't have to cook! We opted to order out and watch Easter Mass together. I appreciated the time we spent together playing games in the afternoon! It was a welcomed change of pace! Feeling very blessed.

This week will fly by! Please follow your child's teacher's emails for this week's schedule. Some are opting to run Tuesday -Friday to fit the four days in. Others are different. I advised them to find a sensible stopping point that works well for the class. I know in the Junior High there are a number of projects due this week—please remind your students to pace themselves and hand them in on time.

New this week: I will be hosting **Milk & Cookies with a Story** ( or 2) on Wednesday at 7:00 PM on ZOOM. I hope many of our students will tune in! I do miss their faces, and stories!! Here is the information:

Topic: Milk & Cookies with Mrs. H

Time: Apr 15, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79156707998?pwd=dDhmZ3RWV3RpUkJuZ2JuRytrYUxaQT09>

**Meeting ID: 791 5670 7998**

**Password: Story**

Also, on Thursday at 7:00PM- I am hosting a **Junior High Trivia Night** for fun! Please ZOOM in to play and share some laughs! Here is the info to join:

Topic: Jr. High Trivia

Time: Apr 16, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75448204051?pwd=YkQvNEdtzdIncnlWQzErVHpWY29yZz09>

**Meeting ID: 754 4820 4051**

**Password: Trivia**

In an effort to be transparent I want to assure you that I will let you know as soon as I know anything about our return to school. As of right now, we are planning to return May 4<sup>th</sup> – but as you know this situation is ever changing. Last time, I learned of the extension at the same time as everyone else- by watching a press conference! If

changes are made over April vacation- I will forward the information along. Currently, I am preparing for a multitude of variables and scenarios- while praying that all decisions out of my control are rooted in the safety of our students, families, and communities.

Please continue to be diligent with handwashing and social distancing. I know it is so tempting, especially as the weather improves, to become complacent – please don't. It is so terribly important we continue to make good choices to be safe during these peak weeks.

Finally, many of the students completed art work for Square 1 Art. Mrs. Smith worked with the students and submitted their creation. They are now available to view and order if you would like. Attached is the information to access the web page. There is also free shipping at this time. Thank you, Mrs. Smith for following up with this. I know so many students were excited to see their work!

Hope to see some of the students on Zoom this week!!!

God Bless,

Mrs. Henderson

### **Grade 8 Parent Update April 9, 2020**

Good Morning 8th Grade Parents and Students:

I hope this letter finds you and your family well, or as well as can be expected during this challenging time. I am confident you did not anticipate spending the last trimester at St. Monica School learning remotely and missing the daily connections with your classmates.

Things are ever-changing, day to day, week to week- and because of this I have resisted making definitive changes to our plan in place to celebrate our 61<sup>st</sup> graduating class. Obviously, we will need to adapt and be flexible as our state and community shoulder the safety of our school and families. I wish I had some concrete information to share- but I do not at this time. What I can tell you is that I am committed to making sure our eighth graders have a graduation ceremony and the important events leading up to such. Dates and location may change but the spirit of accomplishment and recognition will resonate to assure with confidence our students leave Saint Monica School with memories and the closure necessary for a successful transition to high school.

As of right now, everything is status quo with our plans- however, we know that the fluidity of this pandemic may impact dates, and locations. I will keep you informed as things progress, but I felt it was important for you to know my intention. Regardless of how this will end up looking, it does not take away the dedicated work and diligence your student has demonstrated during this time. Please remind your students to finish strong. They need to continue to participate and complete assignments. Their year is not over yet!

In addition, I am trying to put together a yearbook for grade 8. Mrs. Bistany said she spoke to the students earlier about this. I would like each student to create two scrap book pages (8.5 X 11 in) to decorate any way they would like. They can use any color paper, pictures, stickers, drawings anything they would like. Pictures can include their friends, family, sports etc. When these pages are completed – we will professionally copy and bind them to create a tangible memory book for each student. These pages need to be completed by May 11th. If we are not back in school by that date- I will set up a drop off box at the school in order to get them on time.

Finally, I will be creating a slide show for the class of 2020. I would like each student to have 12 pictures, 1 must be a baby photo, and 1 must be a family photo. The other 10 can be any pictures of your choice. Ideally there should be some group pictures with their classmates through the years. I have set up a separate email to have these pictures scanned to so they will all be sent to one location. Please also feel free to send over any additional photos of school events that were/are relevant to this graduating class. The email to send the photos to is: [SMSgrade8@methuencatholic.org](mailto:SMSgrade8@methuencatholic.org).

As you can see, our eighth-grade class has been on my mind and I am doing my best to make sure they can look back on this milestone with pride.

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Have a Blessed Easter.  
Mrs. Henderson

### **Parent Update April 8, 2020**

Greetings Parents and Families:

Unbelievably, St. Monica School is completing our fourth week of remote- digital learning! It doesn't look the same as it did on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup> when our challenge began! I am so proud of our community and the continuity we have been providing our students in this new, very unorthodox normal!

I need to recognize the incredible efforts our teachers are making to keep our students engaged and learning. For every 40-minute ZOOM you may witness with your child, teachers are training, networking, researching, and preparing to make sure they are meeting the needs of our students. This doesn't include the correcting and feedback they provide as well. This type of instruction for this length of time has been unprecedented – we are navigating unfamiliar territory. Each week we try to reevaluate and fine tune while taking in the everchanging situations of our families. It may not always look pretty, there are plenty of hiccups, internet failures, emails getting lost in the shuffle etc. But I do know that our intentions are pure – we are doing the very best we can with the resources we have! From where I stand, be it knee deep as a parent, teacher, and administrator- St. Monica School is rocking it!!

The true heroes of this four-week journey have been you, the parents and grandparents implementing the coursework. Juggling home responsibilities and balancing the new normal of working from home is not easy by any means! If your home is anything like mine- I feel like my house has been transformed into a 24-hour diner and I have been hired as the head chef, a job I do not remember applying for!!

With all that being said, parents are keeping students on track, advocating for their needs, and most importantly loving these children and making them feel secure. It is so important moving forward that we put things into perspective. Looking back at this time, weeks, months, years, and even decades from now- no one is going to remember page 175 in the workbook, but they will remember how they felt. We need shift our focus a bit to meet our students' social emotional needs as well as their academic needs. So please, take the small pockets of time that may surface to play that game, go for a family walk or watch a movie together. These are the memories we want our students to hold onto as they weave their own tapestry in their history. If your child is struggling with the unknowns of this pandemic, or becoming anxious- please reach out to Mrs. Kaatz. She is an amazing resource to our school. She is available to connect with students and parents via ZOOM if you would find this beneficial. Thank you so much to all our parents, and grandparents for supporting our school and helping us find success in this remote learning and living.

Thursday begins the holiest days of our faith- the Triduum. These are the days when typically, our school would be learning about the Last Supper, the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Stations of the Cross, Jesus' death and His Resurrection. I know our teachers have been incorporating this liturgical season into their lessons. Take advantage of the Liturgical celebrations online. Please continue to post on our private Facebook page pictures of your family's Easter celebrations. I can't wait to see everyone!

Please know I will keep your family in my prayers during the next few days and always until we are able to gather together to pray as a community. Remember to pray for each other!

Blessings,  
Mrs. Henderson

**Parent Update April 7, 2020**

Dear Parents,

Please see below. These resources are free for our remote learning duration. Our school is registered accordingly. There is something for all grades.

Mrs. Henderson STRONGLY encourages all 3rd, 4th and 5th graders to take advantage of this opportunity to practice their multiplication tables to facilitate higher processes.

Thank you,  
Mrs. Tully



Dear School Administrators and Teachers,

We received your request for at-home access to ABCmouse, Adventure Academy, and ReadingIQ for families who

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**This email provides a link to a Family Invitation Letter along with your district's unique School Code for free programs.** Families are able to add up to three children per account.

**[Download Family Invitation Letter with School Code](#)**

If you need additional assistance, or if parents or caregivers need assistance with redeeming this code or have questions, our Customer Support team is available at [Support@AofL.com](mailto:Support@AofL.com).

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With our best wishes,

## The Age of Learning Team

### Parent Update March 30, 2020

Announcing two impactful webinars for parents and school personnel. Both webinars will provide time for interaction with national professionals, Dr. Nancy Rappaport and Dr. Robert Brooks.

Webinar 1: **Remaining Resilient in an Uncertain Time** (April 1, 2020 from 9:00am-10:00am)

Registration Link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4892473106677222155>

The late psychologist Julius Segal wrote that for children to be resilient they need the presence of “charismatic adults” in their lives. Such adults provide an important source of strength and stability for children, especially during this pandemic. By taking care of ourselves and building our own resilience and managing our understandable stress, we are better able to support our children. Drs. Brooks and Rappaport will discuss:

- Adopting a “personal control” outlook, which focuses on the things we CAN control, such as our attitudes and responses to challenges
- Maintaining social and professional connections during social distancing
- Making TLCs: therapeutic lifestyle changes, including exercise, diet, and mindfulness/prayer
- Finding “contributory activities” which enrich the lives of others without compromising our own well-being
- Focusing on gratitude

Webinar 2: **Supporting Students in an Uncertain Time** (April 3, 2020 from 9:00am-10:00am)

Registration Link:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8744984829032287499>

Drs. Brooks and Rappaport will discuss how to support our children and students during this time of uncertainty and change. Topics will include:

- Communicating in ways that are age-appropriate, calm, honest, and realistically hopeful
- Validating children's questions and worries and remaining emotionally available when kids express their emotions in challenging ways
- Balancing structure and rigidity around schedules, schoolwork, and media
- Supporting students with a history of trauma and those with challenging home lives
- Promoting problem-solving skills, maintaining social connections, and providing "contributory activities" that allow children to help others

#### **Gr. 4 & 5 Parent Update March 30, 2020**

Hello Parents:

Have you ever heard the old saying, when life gives you lemons- make lemonade? I am ready to jump in!

As you may know, I am a trained, tried and true grade 4 and 5 math teacher for twenty plus years. As I am settling into this new normal, I am missing the daily interaction with students and their learning. So, I thought I could do what I love to do- teach math via ZOOM twice a week for each grade level.

So here are the details:

Grade 4 will meet Monday and Wednesday at 1:00 PM

Grade 5 will meet Tuesday and Thursday at 1:00 PM

The ZOOM meeting ID is: 763-271-686

The password is: 837911

All I ask is that students enter with a positive attitude, ready to learn, and eager to have a good time! We will travel to Fraction World, play in Decimal Land, learn tricks for division, master our facts and learn about factors and divisibility. I will not use a book, but I will email you a fun activity to practice what I taught on the alternate days when you don't have class.

This is a no stress zone—if you can't make it one day—its ok. If you want to jump on all four days- go for it! Please have some white paper with pencil and or a white board and

markers available. This is going to be lots of fun!! Please email me if your student plans to participate, so I can prepare appropriately. Hope to have everyone hop on to ZOOM.

In addition, my daughter Zoe is home from school and is half way through her Math Elementary Education course at the University of New England. She has offered to practice with students in small groups via ZOOM Monday through Thursday at 3 PM. This is a win-win because she will be able to gain valuable experience adapting to this new way of teaching while students are building skills and confidence. I hope it gives you as parents a little break too! Please email me if you are interested in some additional small group practice and I will set up a ZOOM!

Looking forward to learning together!

Mrs. Henderson

### **Parent Update March 30, 2020**

Dear Parents:

Here we are – week 3!! I hope you are holding up well! It seems as though just when we thought we had a groove; we get thrown a new curve! So it looks like we are doing this dance until May 4<sup>th</sup>! Although I am deeply frustrated, I know this is for the safety of our students, families and community. We need to flatten this curve and continue to practice frequent handwashing, good hygiene, social distancing! St. Monica students and families are in my daily prayers.

So I have been spending a good deal of time with other Catholic School principals not only from our area and the Archdiocese of Boston- but I have been able to ZOOM principals around the country. This has been a great source of support and resources. One point that is being stressed is this is not ‘homeschooling’ in its true sense. What we are experiencing is “crisis schooling”. The name surely does feel more authentic as we plan, implement, retreat, revise and do our best for our students. It really got me thinking that there is no way we can duplicate what is done in a classroom in this state of remote learning we are currently in. Professionally lead instruction, practice, assessment, social learning, emotional support cannot be manufactured artificially – so once again we need to step back, reflect and streamline our approach to this new normal.

I have read and responded to your emails, smiled at the Facebook posts, shed tears of frustration, and have done my best to gather the data from your perspective to implement some changes that I feel will best serve our students, teachers, and most importantly the sanity of our families.



We are going to streamline the work load. Teachers will be emailing how this will look for their individual students. These are not changes that can be implemented across the board because of the varied grade levels. Minimally, you should see a decrease in worksheets and overall a more reflective approach to learning- especially in grades K-5. Junior High students should not shift too much as they are more independent and have the benefit of regular ZOOM instruction with their teacher- however there will be some adjustments.

Because of this change- any work from March 30<sup>th</sup> through May 4<sup>th</sup> will be assessed as a Pass/ Fail. Teachers will still offer feedback and corrections but we will not be nitpicky nor have the sheer volume of the past two weeks. However, there is an exception- teachers will determine how any long term, independent project that was assigned prior will be graded. I encourage them to use the rubric in place prior to March 30<sup>th</sup>, but ultimately it will be their call. Mrs. Tully and I will be working on how these grades will be recorded on FACTS. I expect we will have that figured out by mid-week. Once again, I implore your patience while we make this adjustment.

This shift was not made lightly. There were too many variables that were out of the control of typical classroom protocol, and varying parent situations, that the playing field was not equitable for our students. There are pros and cons to this and I have attached a hand out so you can read it for yourself. Please know any grades already inputted will stand as is. Depending on when we return to school- we should be able to create a formula for final grade determination on the report card.

On a positive note, we are going to a four-day week for the duration of our remote learning. We will be working Monday- Thursday leaving Friday to catch up for students and teachers will be able to plan and work together remotely. Also, we have been encouraged to plan to keep our April vacation as scheduled, as well as Good Friday and Easter Monday off.

Unfortunately, after consulting with Mrs. Piskopanis and Mrs. Castagna, I am going to cancel the Science Fair for 2020. I am very sad about this, however with our situation changing and the fact that the majority of projects were collaborative- not to mention the additional stress families are experiencing, I feel it would be best. If you have completed some work on the project – save it. The Science Fair will be back next year and you will have a head start!!

I have received a few inquiries about March Madness. Trust me, no one misses it more than Mrs. Tully and myself. We promise that when we get back, we will jump right in where we left off. This will give us something to look forward to.

Please remember that if you are in need of emergency funds for the remainder, contact Ms. Kera Mansour at [methuencatholic@gmail.com](mailto:methuencatholic@gmail.com) Applications are due April 1<sup>st</sup> for the first round at the Catholic Schools Foundation.

As always, let us pray to St. Monica, St. Lucy, St. Julie and St. Francis for the safety and health of our school family, our community, and our world. Most importantly, remember to pray for one another.

Peace,

Mrs. Henderson

### **List of the Pros of the Pass/ Fail Grading System**

1. This grading system places less stress on the student. Students who take classes in the traditional grading system often have tremendous levels of stress they endure to do well on assignments and tests. The pass-fail grading system eliminates this issue almost entirely. Students no longer need to worry about their grade-point average with this system. There is less pressure and perceived stress because one moment of failure won't define their grade.

2. It improves the mood of the students in the classroom. When there is less stress in the classroom because of the pass-fail grading system, then there is an improved mood in the student body. Instead of focusing on an upcoming exam or paper, everyone can spend more time with the materials taught in the class.

3. There is more cohesion in the classroom. When there is a pass-fail grading system in place, then students don't see each other as competition any more. Students can work together freely with one another in the pass-fail grading system because everyone will either earn credit or not based on a specific threshold. Getting together in a study group so that everyone can pass is easier to do because there is no longer pressure to get an A grade on every assignment.

4. Students are more willing to take academic risks with a pass-fail system. When students tackle a new subject in the classroom, then they typically avoid anything that would be challenging. This advantage makes it possible for students to gain confidence with new subject materials while becoming well-rounded in their areas of strength. It is a process which ultimately leads to having more knowledge, which can then be turned into wisdom.

5. It creates a system which offers fairness in grading. There are some subjects which have objective grading systems, such as mathematics and science, where there are definitive "right" and "wrong" answers. Then there are the educational materials which are more subjective, like creative writing, art, political science, and philosophy. Because there isn't a standard method of judging a student in these areas that is universal, a pass-fail grading system creates added fairness to the educational system because grading is no longer based on favoritism or arbitrary methods.

6. This grading system removes the negative stigmas that come with poor grades. The pass-fail grading system create equality because there is less of a focus on the final outcome.

7. It eliminates the punitive aspects out of the grading system. The performance-based grading systems that we use throughout the entire educational system are deeply entrenched in our identity. By shifting to a strict pass-fail grading system, then you either achieve success or you do not. There is no middle ground where a student passes a subject.

8. We can apply the pass-fail grading system at all levels. Most kids in the United States actually start school using the pass-fail grading system for their work. Teachers up until fourth grade (and higher in some districts) indicate that a student's work is outstanding, adequate, progressing, or needs improvement. Instead of receiving a specific letter grade, this system communicates to children and their parents where their unique strengths and weaknesses are in the classroom. Students can then make adjustments to their learning habits to ensure they can meet their target goals. Instead of focusing on a specific letter, the pass-fail grading system looks at an approach which favors self-advocacy, self-assessment, and self-regulation. It gives a student the opportunity to evaluate their personal growth and progress to know if their comprehension of materials is adequate for their future needs.

9. No one needs a grade to learn practical skills. If you earn an A grade in mathematics, will that be a benefit to a future career in journalism? Does earning a C grade in science hold someone back from becoming a plumber? When we look at the idea of education at the college or university level, when looking at practical or technical disciplines, then the pass-fail grading system is a better option to consider because it eliminates ratings and ranks. Practical skills only require a student to show that they are proficient in a specific task. That means you can work at your own pace, passing the class when you show that you have a mastery of the expertise needed to pursue vocational opportunities in a chosen career. Instead of providing a façade of coherence, the pass-fail grading system can prove that a student has what it takes to be successful.

### **List of the Cons of the Pass Fail Grading System**

1. Removing performance-based grades eliminates competitiveness. There are many forms of motivation that you can find in the modern classroom. Some students like to challenge themselves to achieve the best grade possible. Others find that learning something new propels them toward a better grade. Some students like to compete with others to see where they stand in the classroom with relation to the materials being studied. The pass-fail grading system eliminates the benefits of competition from the classroom. Instead of trying to achieve the best grade possible, students are asked to meet a lower threshold of passing. Although that line doesn't move for either grading

system, trying to earn an A grade is very different than attempting not to fail from an academic standpoint.

2. It can cause students to start forming unhealthy learning habits. The pass-fail grading system can encourage procrastination because the work feels like it isn't as difficult. Because students need to meet a lower minimum to earn credit for the class, there can be a lack of focus on the materials. If this attitude becomes a habit, then the homework can get put on the back burner when other classes might offer performance-based grading systems. Although the lack of pressure can be helpful for some, having stress and pressure can lead to structured and healthy learning habits that aren't as necessary when passing the class is the primary need.

3. The pass-fail grading system does not accurately reflect student understanding. When you receive notification of your grade in the pass-fail grading system, then you've either gained the credits for the class or you did not. Does the student know how well they did against the curve of everyone in the classroom? Is there clear and complete knowledge about the subject matter? Because there isn't a performance-based grade offered to a student in most circumstances, there is no feedback offered to a student to let them know how their overall work stands up to everyone else. Students can counter this disadvantage by speaking with their teacher about what their letter-based grade might be, but some instructors might not keep track of that information if the pass-fail grading system is in place.

4. You won't receive a boost to your GPA with a pass-fail class. Under most grading systems in the United States, classes which follow the pass-fail grading system do not contribute any marks toward a student's final grade-point average. The instructors will use marks like "P" or "F" to indicate that credits are awarded for progress.

5. Conversions to a letter-based grade are not possible. Once you decide to pursue a pass-fail grade in class, then a conversion back to a performance-based grade is not possible under most circumstances.

6. It reduces the incentives to work harder to achieve something better. Imagine that a student is currently sitting at a C grade in class. This person knows they can continue to maintain this grade level and it passes them, so they decide to take the credit over the grade by converting to the pass-fail grading system. There is no longer an incentive to study harder, put more effort into assignments, or participate more often in class.

7. The pass-fail grading system does not eliminate grading bias entirely. Many students decide to take advantage of the pass-fail grading system when they feel like the grades offered by their teacher or professor are arbitrary, subjective, or based on personal interactions.

8. It doesn't work with our current system of evaluation in schools. The strongest argument that exists for keeping performance-based grades around instead of using a generalized pass-fail grading system is that the system is entrenched in the global educational system.

9. We don't really know how to learn without a grade. Many people are highly conditioned to think of themselves in the terms of a grade. We even do this outside of the classroom at times, sometimes without realizing that this is what we are doing. Grades can cause stress and anxiety, but so can not getting them. When a student completes an assignment, then there is an expectation to receive a grade as a "reward" for the work. Without receiving that feedback, it is challenging to know whether your efforts are on the correct path for success. Even though there are benefits to the pass-fail grading system, students and teachers are used to performance-based grading. It is a comfortable arrangement where there is a system of feedback and criticism offered that allows each person to improve their performance in the classroom.

10. Teachers would lose some of their authority in the classroom. The traditional grading system creates a control mechanism for teachers in the classroom. It is used as a motivational factor for students who might not otherwise engage with the environment. Without the presence of a specific letter for feedback, there may be less effort placed on studying for exams. Instructors would lose a portion of their institutional power over the learning environment because there would be less fear of failure. Since this is usually the last line of defense against indolence or insolence, taking it away could drive some teachers away from their work for good.

### **Parent Update March 25, 2020**

Good evening:

This is a quick check in to let you know we are still working here- trying to utilize the best practices we have available to serve our students and families! We are learning new things every day! If someone told me a year ago that we would be teaching and administrating remotely and we had 36 hours to pull it together for all grades I would have fell off my chair in laughter!! Look at us now!! We are making it work- it's not perfect or ideal by any means—but it is authentic and coming from a good place!!

The past seven days of remote learning has been overwhelming. Our teachers are answering emails, correcting downloads, zooming, facetimeing etc! They have had little time to catch their breath and regroup! Typically, some planning time is built into their schedule and even more work is often taken home. I am so impressed by our staff's responsiveness and work ethic!

I am also amazed by our parents and students. Parents are the new rock stars for sure!! Many parents are balancing work and supervising school work on top of it! Everyone has stepped up. We are learning differently, but we are still learning!!

With that being said, in an effort to be transparent—I think everyone needs a day off to take a break and catch up. So, on Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> there will be no school! Please take time to let the kids sleep in, enjoy a break and have some quality family time. If our student has fallen behind- use this time to reassess and catch up! Classes and emails will resume next week – I promise! This will allow the faculty to virtually meet, regroup, and develop a game plan for the next week.

Finally, if any family is in need of emergency funds to help cover tuition in light of our current situation, please email Ms. Kera Mansour at [methuencatholic@gmail.com](mailto:methuencatholic@gmail.com) . The Catholic School Foundation just announce they added additional application opportunities for families in need. The first deadline is the first week of April. Please reach out to Ms. Mansour and she will work with you to apply for these emergency funds. The sooner the better.

As always, I am available via email- please do not hesitate to reach out if there is anything I can do to help.

God bless you and your loved ones!

Mrs. Henderson

### **Parent Update March 23, 2020**

Good Morning Parents and Students:

Here we are, week two of this unique new learning routine. I hope everyone is getting into a groove and balancing this new normal. I too have been learning how to adjust to working from home, and coordinating the learning of my own student and respecting the independence of two college students figuring out their semesters! We have spent a lot of time in reflection and prayer on how to proceed day to day, (sometimes even hour to hour!) and I find myself letting go and letting God. Accepting that there are things within my control and so much out of my control. The Serenity Prayer is daily on my lips and my faith is strengthened knowing God will walk this path with me, influencing my heart and mind.

I have been beyond impressed and grateful with the resiliency of our St. Monica Community. Our teachers are going above my expectations. St. Monica School now ZOOMS, Facetimes, Marco Polos, and uses Google Classroom and Hangout! A teacher even has her own You Tube channel! We now have a Private Facebook Group - St.

Monica Methuen Parent Page which is where we are posting resources and fun activities and parents can post pictures too! It has been comforting seeing pictures of our students completing their work, doing experiments, art projects and listening to stories.

I can imagine by now; some anxiety is setting in and lot of questions are being asked by your child. Mrs. Kaatz, will be available Tuesday and Thursday morning via email to check in with students and families as needed. Her email is [jkaatz@methuencatholic.org](mailto:jkaatz@methuencatholic.org). Please reach out to her with any questions you may have. She has also provided a couple of handouts that I will attach to this email.

As I started saying in the beginning of this letter- we are beginning week two! I suspect the emails will be streamlined in comparison to last week. I do apologize if you felt inundated last week. We too are learning how to meet the needs of all our students in different situations and access different resources. There will be weekly assignments. Grades 6-8 will continue to post on FACTS and I know some are trying to utilize Google classroom. Other grades will continue to use what is in place – email. I also recommend Genius Scan (an APP) that takes a picture of work and you can email it immediately by phone or iPad. I was pleasantly surprised how easy it was.

I have asked teachers to send a daily check -in each morning. This has a dual purpose. First and foremost, we want to be sure of your wellness, secondly, we want to make sure you are receiving the information we are communicating. The Catholic Schools Office has asked each school to connect with each family regularly. **I would truly appreciate it if you would kindly reply back to the teacher emails. A simple “got it” will suffice.** If we do not hear from you over a few days, Mrs. Tully will call to check in. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or Mrs. Tully if there is anything we can help with.

Although Kindergarten parents will not receive the traditional Report Cards as planned, each student will receive some feedback in the narrative form from their teacher. This may help guide some practice and suggest some areas to reinforce during this time. I would expect these to be sent out by Wednesday.

Again, please know I appreciate your patience during this time. The entire St. Monica School family is in my thoughts and prayers. Please continue to pray for one another.

Mrs. Henderson

**Date: Fri, Mar 20, 2020 at 10:37 AM**

**Subject: A Note from Fr. Colarusso**

In this unprecedented time the doors of St. Monica and St. Lucy Parishes remain open for us to be in the Presence of our Eucharistic Lord! Though our regular public worship schedule is temporarily on hold, know that the priests still celebrate Mass in private for those intentions already received and for further intentions for all of us in the current time. Additionally, everybody involved in prayer ministry--priests, deacons, and apostolates of lay faithful-- is praying even more intently for this current crisis to pass safely and our lives to return to normal.

How are we responding to the suspension of publicly scheduled religious events? By serving the Lord and making Him accessible for private visits. First: our usual Mass schedule is replaced with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. On Sundays, the Eucharist will be consistently exposed in the main church at St. Lucy from 9:00am through 12:00pm and at St. Monica from 7:30am through 12:30pm. The same is the case during Daily Mass times: Monday- Wednesday, 8:00am, St. Lucy; Thursday-Friday, 8:15 / Saturday 8:00am, St. Monica. The only difference being that at St. Monica, the weekday Exposition will occur in Gethsemane Chapel. Please keep in mind that we will be in a spirit of quiet prayer and practicing what has been termed "social distancing." Similarly, the Lenten program, as you would expect, is suspended: Wednesday evening Light Is On confessions, Stations of the Cross, and the multiple Penance Services are all cancelled. However, the typical weekly times for Confession and Adoration that we use throughout the year remain unchanged.

The announcement of the name "Gethsemane Chapel" brings us to a second point.

We continue to work as a staff and parish community on ongoing projects. As you remember, we selected the name of the Adoration Chapel by a vote of the entire community a couple of weeks ago. The big rollout of the name and plans for the Chapel dedication have been put on hold, though that will eventually happen; but we are moving forward with calling it Gethsemane Chapel no differently as if we had a public ceremony. The same is true for using this time to improve many aspects of parish life: from outreach efforts, to faith formation, to just plain cleaning out the basements--we are not idle as your staff!

Which brings up one final point. What is essentially a ban on social interaction has financial effects on businesses, the community, and all of us as individuals. Those of you with a fixed or reduced income must do what you can the next few weeks to weather this hardship. Know of our prayers that you will be "free from every evil and safe from all distress!" Of course, this no less applies to the Church. Just one week of missed offertory creates an incredible hardship on our Parishes. If at all possible, please continue your regular offertory donations. We will not be having a collection system setup in the churches, but you can bring or mail your weekly envelopes to the Parish Office at [254 Merrimack St. Methuen, MA, 01844](https://www.methuencatholic.org). More importantly, I ask you to please consider enrolling in Online Giving at this time.

You may register at [www.methuencatholic.org/onlinegiving](https://www.methuencatholic.org/onlinegiving). Online Giving provides a convenient, secure, and confidential way to consistently donate to the parishes while



also ensuring their financial stability. Please call the office at 978-683-1193 if you have any questions.

My hope and prayer is that when things return to “normal,” we will, in fact, have become more faithful.

As the Cardinal has said: “May our prayers in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament be a source of strength and peace for all Catholics and for anyone who wishes to join us. Let us call upon the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God, as we confidently pray for the time when we will resume the celebration of the Eucharist throughout the Archdiocese of Boston.”

Yours in Christ,

Fr. C.

### **Parent Update March 18, 2020**

Good afternoon Parents and families:

I hope this update finds you well. I am sure you are feeling inundated with emails and bulletins. I wanted to give you an overview of what we are doing at school so everyone is in the loop.

As you may know, school is closed until April 7<sup>th</sup>. Although we may not be on-site, the teachers and staff are dedicated to facilitate learning to the best of our ability utilizing the resources we have available to us.

There are a few things I would like you to know. As of now, there has been no positive or presumed positive cases of COVID-19 associated or linked to our school. As good as this is- we are still taking every precaution possible. While the building is empty each bit of space is undergoing a severe deep clean by our janitorial staff. Each room is being systematically cleaned and then locked until we are allowed to return.

We cannot stress enough the importance of staying home, practicing precautions and social distancing. All these mandated closures are in an effort to decrease the curse of exposures and positive cases. We all need to work together to do our part.

Teachers will be reaching out to each student’s family daily. This is a way for us to complete a wellness check and to try to troubleshoot any problems that may be surfacing. Some teachers are emailing or posting daily assignment others are assigning work for the week and others a combination of both. As we as a staff identify new

resources available, I am confident they will pass them along to families. This remote learning is a bit foreign to all of us- we are simply trying to make sure our students are engaged in learning and making progress in their studies moving forward. We appreciate your cooperation and support for our students during this stressful time. On our end, we realize that each situation for each student is different. We will continue to be flexible and available to support this learning until we are back into a typical routine.

Report Cards for grades 1-8 will be emailed on Friday morning. Please look for it in your inbox.

If any family is in need of food, please contact St. Vincent de Paul at 978-686-1801 extension 115. That is the school number, just dial 115 at any time during our message. Please leave your name and phone number and they will get back to you as soon as possible. Also, Lawrence residents are able to access Grab and Go meals for students at Lawrence High School, Arlington, Parthum, and Guilmette Schools from 11:00-1:00PM.

Tonight at 9:00 PM Pope Francis has asked all people to simultaneously pray the Rosary for healing of the world during this pandemic. Please join us in this prayer.

Finally, in addition, I am attaching Cardinal Sean video message that he would like all families to watch.

**Cardinal Sean released a video message today for the Archdiocese of Boston.**

The message in English: <https://vimeo.com/398384772>

The message in Spanish: <https://vimeo.com/398510550>

The message in Portuguese: <https://vimeo.com/398510164>

Please know your family is in our prayers and we are looking forward to things getting back to normal.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Henderson

### **Parent Update March 13, 2020**

Dear St. Monica School Families:

It has been a confusing few days as the COVID-19 outbreak continues to unfold, and we understand how anxiety-inducing this may be for all of you and your families. Please

know that we continue to closely monitor federal and state agencies for information and are working diligently to keep the entire school community healthy and safe. First and foremost, it is important to note that St. Monica School has no confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19. Mrs. Sanborn and myself have been diligently monitoring absences, following up with doctor's notes and in communication with parents. I have also been in communication with the Department of Health, Archdiocese of Boston and working in collaboration with the Methuen School Department to best protect our community.

With that being said, this situation is changing hour to hour and it is important to be prepared for possible school cancelations. It is my goal to be aligned with the Methuen Public School protocol similar to what we do for snow day cancellations. **At this time, St. Monica School will follow the Archdiocese of Boston's directive and the Methuen School Department and close until March 30th.** As things progress and change, I will continue to share that information with you and your family.

St. Monica School has an education plan in place for a continuation of learning in the event we move to a remote learning environment (online). Faculty and staff have met this morning to put together a plan and discuss what this online learning will look like for the different grade levels. There is no way we could replace the valuable instruction offered by our teachers, but we want to make sure our students do not lose any skills.

This is what I can share generally. Our goals are simple.

1. Students should be engaged in learning activities that keeps skills fresh and minds active.
2. We will utilize the various on-line resources and subscriptions we already have in place: Grades K-2 SuperKids, Grades 3 – 8 HMH Into Reading and Literature, Grades 3-8 Pearson Social Studies, Grades 6-8 Pearson Science, IXL Math for Grades 6-8 as well as Google Classroom. All assignments will be accessible by parents through the FACTS/Renweb Student information system. In addition, teachers may continue to send emails with updates.
3. We need to work together to navigate this situation the best we can. This is not a perfect system and there will be things that are out of our control. It is hard for me to depend solely on technology for learning, especially with our youngest scholars- but we will do the best we can.

4. I will work with teachers to make sure activities and assignments are reasonable and most importantly-fair.

Another important part of keeping our campus safe involves frequent deep cleaning and disinfecting of the building by our janitorial staff and maintenance workers. They are working tirelessly to make sure “touch points” (door knobs, faucets, hand rails, etc.) and high traffic areas are kept clean for our safety. As stated by the Centers for Disease Control, the best protection against COVID-19 starts with each of us. Simple actions such as washing your hands, avoiding sick individuals and staying home when you are sick are best practices for combating this illness.

Please know that the welfare of our students, staff, and their families is my number one priority. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I will do my best to answer your questions or direct them to an optimal resource for an answer. In peace and health,

Mrs. Donna Henderson