



Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

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Living and Learning in the Light of Faith

March 14, 2020

Dear Diocese of Biloxi Catholic School Families:

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we have closely monitored the events unfolding with the Coronavirus. The safety and security of our students, faculty, and staff is always a top priority.

- All schools will be closed for students the week of March 16-20, 2020. Possible additional closings may be required.
- All activities will be cancelled or delayed during the time the school is closed. This includes extracurricular activities and athletics.
- Lessons have been prepared for the time the students will be out of school.
- Directions on these lessons will be given to you by your Principal.
- Principals and teachers will be available via school email for the time the students are out of school.
- We continue to follow the situation and if additional changes are necessary, they will be sent to you. This will include any possible quarantine guidelines.

Bishop Louis Kihneman has been closely involved with all decisions and sends his prayers for all of our students, families, faculty and staff.

Please continue to remember all involved in your daily prayers. Reach out to your Principal or to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for being a part of the ministry of Catholic education.

Sincerely,
Rhonda P. Clark, PhD
Superintendent of Education

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Mrs. Judy Illich, Asst. Principal
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The Deacon's Desk

...a Parent Guide to the Week Ahead at St. Alphonsus Catholic School

Volume 2, Issue 30 March 16, 2020

School Advisory Council:

Matthew Mestayer
George Sliman
Dr. Gregory Patiño
Esmeralda Stadthagen
Sheila Kowalewski
Fr. Michael Snyder
Deacon Jim Gunkel

Postponed...

Boosterthon postponement is being discussed, as well as any other event already on the books. We will let you know as soon as we know more. Thank you!

Coming Up...



School CLOSED	MAR 16- 20
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Due to the fluid state of possible future closure, we are not posting event rescheduling (Boosterthon, etc.) until such time as we know more information. Please stay tuned to all of the usual portals (email, Shutterfly, website, etc.). We THANK YOU for your patience and understanding as we work through this time. God Bless you and your family!

Diocese: Schools Closed Next Week, March 16-20



The Diocese of Biloxi has made the decision to close all schools effective this Monday, March 16 through Friday, March 20. A letter from Dr. Rhonda Clark, Superintendent of Catholic Education was attached to the email that delivered this newsletter to you. **Important: More closure time may be announced following next week; as a diocese, we are taking it one week at a time.** We have packets prepared for pickup with resources for your children to use as review and practice. There is enough work for 2 weeks, just in case further closing time is mandated. **You may pick the packets up from your child's classroom at school Sunday (March 15) between the hours of 2:00 and 4:00.** Teachers will be here in your classrooms, and Judy and I will be here as well. If you need other arrangements, please contact us and let us know. We will continue to keep you posted through normal channels during this time, so keep alert for notices of further closings, etc. Please feel free to stay in touch with your teachers and administrators during this time. We appreciate your patience and prayers as we all navigate these "unchartered waters". Keep safe and God Bless!

Deacon David

Liturgy Lookout: This Week in Mass...

Commandments to Live by...

Entering our third week of Lent, the liturgy takes last week's theme of humility and "kneads it into the dough" as we take a closer look at obedience, forgiveness, and mercy. Our old testament readings take us through stories of various prophets and biblical icons (Naaman, Moses, Azariah, Elisha), and how their obedience shaped their outlook on repentance. On Monday, Naaman overcomes his own pride to follow Elisha's prescribed healing instructions of going to the river to wash seven times. In Naaman's mind, Elisha's prescription was ridiculous, so he began to leave the country to return home when his servants begged him to rethink his own stubbornness and reconsider. When he did this and repented from his own prideful ways, he found that he was healed. In Tuesday's reading, Azariah repents and prays for mercy, praising God all the while walking through a scorching furnace! He did not rebel against his unjust sentence; instead, he obediently accepted his fate and praised God anyway. How does anyone accomplish feats such as these? It's simple: heed

the commandments set forth by the Lord your God, and you will always do the right thing. Moses teaches the people this in our first reading Wednesday, and Hosea echoes the same theme on Friday.

Our gospel readings reflect the same message, but also roll in love to the mix. Not just love for God, which is the natural part, but love for others – "love your neighbor as yourself" as Jesus teaches us Tuesday. These two "greatest commandments" (love God, love your neighbor) are the foundation Jesus lays for us as the cause for our obedience. When we obey God out of love – genuine love – for Him, we soon find that He's not just throwing us "rules for the sake of rules," but giving us guidelines, rather, that will provide us with a joyful and fruitful life that has meaning. And what is better than that??

But as human beings, obedience is hard. We want to trust our own intellect and avoid doing that which doesn't agree with our own agendas. In fact, we often fight doing this. But when we take time this Lenten season

to slow down, stop, and pray about these tough decisions, we can come to a place of peaceful reflection that can help us heed the Holy Spirit's desire for us. Mrs. Illich and I have learned this several times this year alone, having literally taken things such as the budget, plans, and other issues to the adoration chapel and praying on them before the blessed sacrament. We have been amazed at the guidance this brings, and it has helped us through some difficult times. Our children have been using the chapel more than ever this semester, and you can genuinely feel a difference throughout the school with our spiritual centeredness that wasn't there before.

So, Lent isn't all somberness and sorrow... it's an opportunity to recognize that obedience, discipline, and love make a great recipe for a happy life – and salvation! Have a blessed third week of Lent, and we'll see you at mass.

Blessings and Peace,

Deacon David

Forming Intentional Disciples for CHRIST!

