



March 16, 2020

**TO: St. Michael School**  
**FROM: Mrs. Tara Navarro, Principal**  
**RE: Distance Learning Update**

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16*

Dear St. Michael School Families,

I am writing to say, "Good morning!" to your children; please play for them the attached sound file with our morning prayer and announcements. Perhaps point out to them that many people call today "John 3:16 Day" because of the date, and John 3:16 is one of the world's most widely-quoted Scripture.

I am also reaching out to share information that relates to our distance learning experience. Regarding our first day of this temporary transition to a distance learning platform, we are confident that children will continue to experience a high-quality education. Our dedicated faculty have been working extremely hard to prepare a high-quality learning experience for your child. Your child will be utilizing online resources, creating collaborative projects using Google Docs, submitting assignments online, and communicating with their teachers via Google Classroom... very similar to what they already do in class. Though this is new territory, we have been blessed at StMS to have so many amazing resources, and we have been building this culture and the capacity for this framework for more than five years. You will notice that your child is already familiar and comfortable with many of the programs because it mirrors what our teachers use in the classroom each day.

We are in uncharted territory. Please know that this process will not be perfect, but we are in this together and will need to lean on one another. I fondly recall what my faith mentor and maternal grandmother - Mrs. Delores Lang - told me the day before she passed away (while squeezing my hand and with tears in her eyes): "Only Jesus and the Blessed Mother are perfect, Tara. Whatever you do, it's good enough for God!" I think my "Mama" would also want your children to hear her advice, so please remind them that they don't have to be perfect either! We want them to feel

successful and confident, despite the many questions they will understandably have. Thank you in advance for your patience as we together navigate this new experience.

Timelines of coursework will be flexible, assignments could be collaborative, assessments may be “open-book”, and we are here to help! Asking questions of the teacher will still be possible... our teachers will still connect with your children, the classroom will just look different! We have an incredibly dedicated and talented faculty who will work with you and your child. If you have any course-related questions once teachers share more information this week, I encourage you to reach out to them directly. Curriculum questions can also be sent to Director of Curriculum, Mrs. Heidi Lawrence, at [hlawrence@stmccary.org](mailto:hlawrence@stmccary.org). Or, if your child is feeling nervous about this new experience and/or the effects of COVID-19 on our society, we encourage you to contact one of our licensed school counselors; they want to be able to support you and your children. You may reach both Ms. Lael Mills and Ms. Elissa Pope at [counselorgroup@stmccary.org](mailto:counselorgroup@stmccary.org).

Today is Day 1, and we will start out slowly. Moving forward, students should expect roughly 3 ½ - 4 hours of school work each day. We suggest that your child access Google Classroom sometime between 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. every morning to see what their teacher has posted, if that is feasible given their new schedule at home. Work can be completed at any pace, and in any order. However, if there is an assigned due date, students should make every effort to turn it in on time. If your home schedule presents a conflict with distance learning expectations, please keep us posted!

As it happens, the Positivity Project character strength of the week is “Love of Learning.” The definition is the following: “You master new topics on your own or in school.” As our community makes this distance learning transition together, we will all be learning from each other in new and exciting ways. [Enjoy this video](#) on learning with passion and enthusiasm.

Please visit our StMS [Coronavirus Updates dedicated webpage](#) to access helpful StMS resources and obtain up-to-date information. In addition, you will find a link to a [StMS Technology Support Form](#), if you have any technology questions. Our tech support staff will reach out to help you as quickly as they can. Finally, as we look for ways to support and continually improve your child's distance learning experience, please ask them how they are feeling about this transition and how we can better support them, then let us know.

Quarter 3 will still end on Friday, March 20, as originally planned, while fully recognizing that this last week of the quarter will look different than expected. Report cards will be sent out on time, as originally planned.

As we read in Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus reached out to the woman at the well offering “living water,” and we are called to reach out and support one another in our St. Michael and broader community. Let us pray for one another, and may God bless you and your families this Lent and always.

St. Michael the Archangel, pray for us!

Best Regards,

Tara Navarro, Principal