

March 26, 2020

Message from the Headmaster

Members of the Classes of 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023
Georgetown Preparatory School

Gentlemen,

As Spring Break draws to a close, I wanted to reach out to you with some important information and a few thoughts as we prepare to return to classes. I hope that you and your families have been able to stay safe and healthy in this extraordinary time. As many of you are already aware, Maryland Governor Hogan and the State Superintendent of Schools Salmon announced yesterday that public schools in the state will remain closed through April 24. Georgetown Prep will continue to follow the government's guidance and example; we will transition into a virtual school environment with classes beginning on Monday, March 30. We will continue with online classes at least until April 24 possibly longer, depending on future guidance from our elected leaders and local public health officials. It's never easy to return from two weeks of Spring Break and I'm sure these historic challenges haven't necessarily increased your appetite for schoolwork. That said, perhaps the isolation we have all struggled with has given you a renewed appreciation of the value of our community at Georgetown Prep. I write today to remind you that though our campus is closed, our community remains united.

Later today, Mr. Maginnis will send you an overview of our expectations for how you will approach online learning. I know that you will continue to treat your teachers and classmates with respect and approach your studies with the same seriousness of purpose that you bring to the classrooms in The George, Haas, MacKavanagh, and Boland Hall. Prep is not defined by our buildings and grounds; its distinction comes from our connection to our mission and by the relationships we share with one another. Let's keep that big picture perspective in mind in the coming weeks when, by comparison, the relatively small technical, logistical, and psychological challenges of online teaching and learning threaten to disrupt our focus.

Your teachers have been busy preparing lesson plans for virtual learning and are excited to try to recreate your classroom communities online. As we build this virtual campus it is our intention to construct more than just classrooms:

- Our Director of Mission and Ministry, Mr. Krambuhl, and his team have been thinking of creative ways to continue to support the spiritual life of Prep. Each day a different member of the community will share a prayer or Ignatian reflection by video and we will find other ways to continue our rich liturgical life as we approach the Easter Season.
- Our Athletic Department is getting onboard with the online physical challenge craze starting on Monday through their new Instagram account, [@gprep_fitness](#), and

spring coaches will continue to provide training guidance and ways for teammates to connect.

- Our Arts Department will offer new opportunities for students to engage and find ways to share the talents of our musicians, singers, actors, and visual artists with the wider community.
- Our Director of Counseling Services, Mrs. Napolitano, will be available for individual appointments and virtual office hours to support you if you find yourself struggling with stress, loneliness, isolation, depression, conflict with family or friends, or other challenges in these trying times. Please don't hesitate to reach out to her for a conversation or support including on her new Instagram, account, [@GP_CounselingServices](#).
- Our College Counseling Office stands ready with virtual office hours, continued cohort meetings, and individual guidance to help seniors make your final college selections and assist juniors as you build your college lists and begin preparing your applications.
- Under Mr. Blue's leadership, we will continue to maintain and build academic support structures that you can tap into in addition to your teachers' support during office hours. Ms. Hair and Ms. Vodopivec will continue assisting their students as well.
- Club moderators will continue to support your interests and use this opportunity to expand extracurricular activities as a means for students to connect socially and explore your interests. The Peters (Connolly and Roche) will no doubt continue their solid student leadership as well. I look forward to supporting their efforts.
- Next Wednesday morning, we will be launching an expanded Advisory system so that you can navigate through these changes with a faculty mentor and support from your peers.
- Mr. Harkins and our resident parents, many of whom continue to hold down the fort in Boland and Gunlocke, look forward to re-engaging with their former hallmates even though you are now spread across the globe.
- Finally, our Deans, Mrs. Wilson, Mr. Maginnis, and, of course, Mr. Rodriguez look forward to providing you with encouragement and direction to keep you on track.

All of us remain committed to creating an environment where you are challenged, supported, cared for, and appreciated. Your education and development remain our focus. Even more importantly, I know from experience that you, the students of Georgetown Prep, will rise to play a central role in the successful construction of our new virtual campus. Before I returned to Prep in 2015, I helped found a new high school in Philadelphia and Fr. Van Dyke led a similar effort in Atlanta. We started the schools from scratch and one of the keys to success was our students. They embraced their roles as cofounders and the strong culture they built together has persisted to this day. On Monday, when we open our virtual campus, we will not be starting from scratch but our success will be determined by your desire to embrace your roles not just as brothers but as builders.

Let me take a moment to address our resident students, and, in particular, our international students. We know this pandemic has had a particularly disruptive impact

on each of you. It has pushed you out of your home in Boland and Gunlocke with very little advanced notice. We are grateful for the local families who have welcomed some of you into their homes but also recognize the challenges that this abrupt transition has caused for you. We admire your resilience. If you need to make new arrangements, please feel free to reach out to us. Over fifty local families are standing by with an extra bed, warm meals, and other support. We also know that some of you have chosen to return home. While we expect you to remain engaged with us and meet the same curricular requirements as your D.C. area peers, be assured we will do everything we can to support your particular needs and help you through any logistical challenges that time zone differences and international boundaries may create. Finally, we are committed to keeping you connected to Prep and allowing you to complete the requirements for advancement or graduation, whether or not you are able to return to campus this spring.

Each day at Prep, the faculty and staff work hard to create a space in which you, their students, can come to know yourselves, your world, and your God. Our academic curriculum challenges you to wrestle with various subjects and topics of study not simply so you can pass a test, earn college credit, or find a job, but so you can learn from the experience and thinking of people from the past in preparation for uncertainty in the future—for uncertainty in times like these. Following the German invasion of Poland in 1939, the start of World War II, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt offered these words of encouragement to the American people:

"We have a position of great responsibility. We cannot tell from day to day what may come. This is no ordinary time. No time for weighing anything, except what we can best do for the country as a whole. And that rests, that responsibility on each and every one of us as individuals."

She urged Americans to channel concerns by taking responsibility for individual actions, as difficult as it may be, in service of society. This recommendation, you might notice, aligns closely with the Jesuit call to be men and women for and with others. In line with both these histories, I urge you to take solace in the direction of Mrs. Roosevelt in these times and to remember, in doing so, normalcy will prevail. In the coming days, though you may feel stretched and uncomfortable, you will be growing and becoming what is needed even more in this strange time – extraordinary people, willing to confront the exigencies of the present and work hard in the hope of a better future.

I imagine that most of you have spent the better part of the last two weeks stuck in the house, in close quarters with family or friends. Unlike the end of most school vacations, I am confident that each of you wants nothing more than to return to campus and reconnect with teachers and coaches, classmates and teammates, and your closest friends. I know that your faculty and coaches want to be in the classrooms and on the field with you. Given the state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States has asked you to sacrifice an important time during your adolescence for the sake of the common good. In making this sacrifice, know that the faculty and staff at Georgetown Prep share your disappointments, but more importantly, know that the sacrifices you are making are not in vain. Your commitment to these sacrifices will ensure we return to regularly scheduled campus life in the more immediate future. I look forward to welcoming you back to our

virtual campus on Monday where the faculty and I promise to do everything in our power to provide you with all the resources, community, and love that have been the hallmark of a Prep education since 1789.

AMDG,

John Glennon Jr.
Headmaster