



## From the desk of KIMBERLY A. DESOTELL President, GRACE

October 23, 2020

Dear GRACE Families:

Greetings today on this feast day of St. John of Capistrano! Like so many saints, St. John of Capistrano was a true and great optimist. His optimism was based on the promise of Christ's redemption and the power of conversion even during trying times in his life during the 15th century — a time of great strife and conflict in his native Italy. In studying his life, we learn he entered the Franciscan community during a period of religious apathy and confusion. He found ways to be a uniter, not a divider, among people. During his life, he ministered to the needs of the military in times of war and danger. He is a symbol in our Church of perseverance, patience and resolve. We can learn much from him that applies to our lives today amidst this extraordinary time. Perhaps we find ways to increase patience and resolve in each one of us, and practice our ability to unify others and increase peace even in our own mindset with respect to our day-to-day activities. He is a powerful example of promise and hope. There is a wonderful video [HERE](#) to learn more about St. John of Capistrano as an inspiration to us all today.

As a GRACE community we are now embarking upon this phase of re-entering our schools. We do so with a thoughtful option for families to select either face-to-face learning or virtual learning for their child(ren). I wish to acknowledge Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School, which opened back up for students this past Monday. At OLOL, we have witnessed a steady week of learning and safety each and every day. Students and families have demonstrated strong commitment to health as they returned, and teachers remain steadfast in their dedication to serving the school community. Thank you to Our Lady of Lourdes Cavaliers!

Our re-entrance plans have been published by each school principal this week and encompass elevated safety protocols, enhanced screening practices and modifications to the calendar over the next few months to do our part to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 while offering a safe learning environment for children.

A few of the principles by which we made the decision to return to in-person teaching and learning include:

- We feel children are safest in our schools.
- Ability for us to attend to the social and emotional needs of our children. Our support of these needs relates to our faith connection and commitment to looking out for each other in our schools and community.
- Learning loss can best be addressed.

- Transparency of staff and parents who are following our requests to ensure students are 100% healthy when they are in school and adhering to safe practices outside of school. The honesty and approach of our parents play an important role in the decision.
- Recent articles re-affirm our decision indicating that the spread of the virus is not occurring in schools: [Article: Wall Street Journal](#) [Article: NPR](#).

As we progress, families are encouraged to consider their decisions outside of school to ensure they are acting in a responsible manner with the goal of keeping our schools as safe as possible and, therefore, open to in-person teaching and learning. In addition, families are encouraged to promote outdoor activities together as a family, to increase physical movement and promote physical and emotional well-being. Lastly, we encourage (through support from medical providers and public health) for families to consider flu shots this year especially as a means to keep us all healthy. We encourage you to discuss this decision with your own medical provider.

Like St. John of Capistrano, let us be reminded we are the salt of the earth for ourselves and the rest of our family. We must be the light of the world that brings light to others. Blessings to you all. Enjoy your weekend.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly A. Desotell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimberly A. Desotell  
President, GRACE