

DIOCESE OF PAISLEY



Diocesan Centre
Cathedral Precincts
Incle Street
PA1 1HR

30 March 2020

Dear Headteachers,

I wanted to write and say a word of thanks to you and to offer you encouragement in these unprecedented times in which we now live.

Firstly, I want to thank you for your exceptional work in the run up to what became the premature end of term. I watched your Herculean efforts in getting online learning structures in place in the final few days; an extraordinary achievement by any measure. I pray that any teething problems these technologies presented were soon overcome.

That said, I know how much our families appreciated your generous support to them and their children, not just educationally, but as a appreciated witness of how our diocesan schools endeavour to be a truly supportive presence in our people's lives and homes.

I hope your teachers were not too disappointed that completed coursework will not be uplifted, nor too frustrated that further evidence of school work will not be collected in the interests of equity for learners across the country. Please God, they find some comfort in faith that the good work they accomplished in forming our young people's lives, minds and hearts will yet bear ongoing fruit well into the future.

Please be encouraged, especially in these trying days, in your precious vocation as educators. The courage of our NHS workers and social carers has rightly inspired a whole nation. I want to let you know that your own service to our community as educators, in your schools and now online, is no less valued or appreciated.

On Friday evening, during his *Urbi et Orbi*, Pope Francis led us in a consoling meditation based on Saint Mark's account of the storm on the Sea of Galilee that almost overwhelmed the disciples' boat while Jesus slept. Sleeping and awake Jesus was in control of the situation and was able to bring about a great increase in the disciples' faith even before He calmed the storm, settled the sea and let them safely to the other side. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20200327_omelia-epidemia.html

These days will no doubt have tested your trust in the Lord too as educators who care passionately about the lives and futures of our young people. You can be sure the Lord will not let any of your good work perish, and that He knows well how to save all that matters in your formation of our young and how to bring it safely to the other side.

Please pass on my thanks and encouragement to your staff and school communities, and be assured of my prayers for you all and for your loved ones.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop John