



STONYHURST
1999-2019 Celebrating 20 Years of Co-Education

27th March 2020

Dear Parents and friends,

Easter Letter

I write to you, not from a Stonyhurst eagerly awaiting the Easter Retreat and return of our students to sit the examinations which will prove the culmination of their hard work, but from a Stonyhurst that is strangely silent and still, with no anticipation of when the energy generated by our pupils as they look forward to the glories of summer in the Ribble Valley, will return.

For a number of our pupils who are due to leave this summer, the realisation that the usual rites of passage including Great Academies and the Rhetoric Ball were unlikely to be possible at the expected time, prompted a spontaneous gathering in St Peter's Church to sing their favourite hymns, to pray, and to sing the Stonyhurst *Pater Noster* one more time before departing. There was not a dry eye in the church. I have promised Rhetoric that we *shall* host their Great Academies and Rhetoric Ball, but I cannot yet promise when that will be.

At one of our last College assemblies of the term, I quoted Yeb Sano of the Global Catholic Climate Movement who stated that the current coronavirus outbreak is 'our earth crying' and that the earth's cry is like the cry of the poor. In his letter to the world, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis encourages us to 'safeguard the interest of the poorest of our brethren.' In the terrible crisis that has resulted from Covid-19 there is no doubt that there has been a great deal of human compassion and generosity where the need is greatest. We all hope and pray that this phase will pass soon and until then, that the wider Stonyhurst family is kept safe.

On Wednesday the last of our boarders departed, but at this point we do not know when the Government will allow schools to re-open. Despite the campus currently being 'locked down', the Summer Term calendar is ready to be published and we could re-open within days of the 'all clear'. Whilst we hope to be able to restart term as soon as possible, I cannot predict when that will be and so we have made detailed preparations to deliver our 'Stonyhurst Anywhere' online curriculum.

As some of you will know, we already have a global classroom at Stonyhurst which regularly connects with Jesuit schools around the globe, so it has been a natural extension to develop our wider curriculum to be delivered remotely. On the assumption that current restrictions to movement remain in force we shall be ready to launch a full online directed learning programme for the Summer Term.

For the College there are a number of strands to this: Nicholas Grigsby, Deputy Head Co-curricular, is leading the Heads of Playroom in maintaining a sense of community within the pupil body; Lorraine Wright, Deputy Head Academic, is leading staff in the provision of a rich and stimulating academic provision and Vincent Sharples, Deputy Head Pastoral, will be responsible for ensuring parents are kept up to date with developments and pupils offered pastoral support. By way of example, I attach to this letter a recent communication to your sons and daughters about Safeguarding and Pastoral care for them at this time.





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In addition, our provision for the Summer Term will also include assemblies, co-curricular activities and projects, guided *Examen*, prayers and reflections, PHSE sessions, an object of the week from the *Historic Collections* and much more. Lessons will be live as well as recorded to respond to the different time zones of our global community.

On your behalf I want to thank James Bickerstaff who leaves Stonyhurst at the end of this term. James has had many roles at Stonyhurst, most notably as a Pastoral Head and teacher of Physics. We wish him well in pastures new and welcome in his place Rory Mellows as a teacher of Physics. Rory is a former Stonyhurst pupil who comes to us from the Reading Blue Coat School and is married to Sarah. We look forward to welcoming them to Stonyhurst.

I was recently sent a poem 'And the people stayed home' by an American teacher Kitty O'Meara and I thought I should share with you:

'And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed'.

Despite the challenges of the current times may I wish you and your families a safe and a Blessed Easter.

Yours sincerely,

John Browne
Headmaster

