



The Atonement Academy  
CATHOLIC + CLASSICAL

April 1, 2020

Dear Lower School Families,

I hope you are well and are settling comfortably into your Remote Learning routine. All Lower School teachers were able to contact and receive assignments from every student during the first week, the first milestone we aimed to reach in ensuring a strong start to our Remote Learning Plan. Indications are that our second week is off to an even smoother start. I am pleased with the firm foundation we have set as a community and look forward to our building upon it in the coming weeks.

Last week, I referenced Cardinal Sarah who urges us to confront evil with prayer and not just action (or, given the present situation, extreme inaction). To that end, I want to pass on a resource that has been a solace to me and my family in the absence of our daily school Mass. Passed along to me by an Atonement dad, Bishop Barron is posting video recordings of daily Mass at [wordonfire.org/daily-mass/](http://wordonfire.org/daily-mass/). His Masses are simple but reverent, short enough to keep younger kids focused (mostly) when not actually in a church, and the homilies are excellent, even if used simply as sources of reflection for one's daily reading of Scripture. Another excellent resource to bolster one's daily prayer is *Magnificat*, a monthly prayer publication based on the Liturgy of the Hours. Due to the pandemic, *Magnificat* is currently offering the online and App editions for free ([us.magnificat.net/free](http://us.magnificat.net/free)). There is also a free version for kids between 6 and 12 years of age, replete not only with age-appropriate prayer suggestions but activities to assist children in learning about Christian life and culture.

In addition to schoolwork and prayer, your child's schedule almost certainly includes considerable free time, which, rather than being a waste of time, provides opportunities for genuine leisure, in which a true broadening and ennobling of the spirit may occur. In addition to offering a sample daily routine, The Institute for Catholic Liberal Education ([catholicliberaleducation.org/schoolhome/](http://catholicliberaleducation.org/schoolhome/)) provides some suggestions for using one's free time well, such as gardening, sketching a still-life, and memorizing and reciting poetry. One of my children's favorites from another site ([weareteachers.com/things-to-do-during-covid/](http://weareteachers.com/things-to-do-during-covid/)) is to build a fort out of blankets and furniture and "camping" in it while creating stories to tell the family at dinner.

As part of my own leisure time this weekend, I re-read C.S. Lewis' "Learning in a Time of War," a speech to persuade WWII era university students of the value of studying in wartime. Pertinent in many ways to our current circumstances (though our enemy is much less visible) Lewis says in this speech, "The work of a Beethoven, and the work of a charwoman become spiritual on precisely the same condition, that of being offered to God, of being done humbly 'as to the Lord'." Indicative of the speech's central theme, I found his remark a good reminder that in whatever ways we are using our time - work, study, play - that time, even if not one of formal prayer, can always be an opportunity for contemplation and prayer - the highest forms of leisure.

Be safe and be well. As always, you and your families are in my prayers.

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Dean of Lower School

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