



## **Update from the Lower School Division Head**

**April 21, 2020**

Greetings Primary and Lower School Families,

I am not sure about you, but I am a huge believer in the old adage, “things happen for a reason” and I also believe that the Universe has a way of sending us signs that if we are not careful we can easily miss. I received one such message this morning as I was enjoying my morning coffee and beginning my daily task of checking my emails, which these days come through fast and furious. I do not usually look at all of the promotional emails that come into my inbox. In fact, I quite honestly ignore most of them. However, today something caught my eye and caused me to open it up. The tag line read, “If you can’t go out, go within,” and for some reason today, of all days, it spoke to me in a big way. What does going “within” mean to you? I wonder. For me, it means taking time to stop and pause, to look at where I am in the present space. On any given day this can be very different for me and during this time of a global pandemic and stay-at-home orders, I find that it ranges from immense gratitude and appreciation to pure loneliness and isolation. I imagine that many of you are experiencing a similar range of emotions. With that said, I have learned that I cannot necessarily control where I am going to be on any given day. I can; however, control my reaction to where I am. And, I am finding that in these unprecedented times, I need to respect that more than ever.

I think it is important that we allow ourselves and our children, for that matter, to be in the space that they are in, to acknowledge what they are feeling and thinking, and to decide ultimately what we or they want to do with those feelings. I think it is okay to decide that on some days you just want to relinquish control and feel sad about the things you are missing out on, but I also think it is important that we do not fall into the trap of getting stuck in those spaces. We have to find ways to lift ourselves up and lift each other up. Social distancing is really “physical distancing”, it does not have to mean disconnection. We can still be there for each other emotionally through phone calls, texts, emails, and virtual chats. I know that my personal

“bucket” is filled each and every time I get to see the faces of students, parents, and teachers. I have also come to find joy in simply slowing down to make time to bake cookies with my girls, go on a bike ride on a beautiful sunny day, or connect with my St. Anne’s colleagues on a Friday evening virtual social hour.

I am curious how you are finding moments of joy and peace and would love to have you share them with us. I would like to focus this Saturday’s Lower School Virtual Coffee on this topic and invite you to think about something you can share with our school community that will help to spread joy and lift each other up. I believe that these unusual circumstances can present us with opportunities for us to learn from each other. How do you go “within” when you can’t go out? Please join me at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 25th to lift each other up and spread a little joy!

I also want to remind you of these upcoming events and opportunities to connect with each other this week.

- Wednesday, 4/22 at 9:45 a.m. - Weekly [Chapel](#) Service
- Wednesday, 4/22 at 10:30 a.m. - [All-School Earth Day Kahoot Challenge](#), hosted by Mrs. Wilson & Mrs. Shpak *You will need to be able to split your screen or use two devices (i.e. a computer and a smartphone) to participate. Here is a [tutorial](#) for how to split your screen.*
- Friday, 4/24 at 9:00 a.m. - Weekly [Pod Devotions](#)

As we continue on this distance learning journey, please know that we remain committed to looking at ways that we can improve and enhance the learning experience for our students. The feedback we have received so far has been incredibly helpful. If you have not had a chance to respond to our distance learning [survey](#), we invite you to do so now. We are planning to discuss the feedback we received at our Lower and Middle School Virtual Coffees on Saturday, May 2nd. We sincerely appreciate your partnership and support as we work together to keep the learning alive for our students. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. Be well and stay safe!

In partnership,  
Valerie

