March 16, 2020

Dear Priests, Deacons, and Principals,

Given the declared pandemic of the COVID-19 Virus and confirmed cases in our diocese, we issue the following directive:

We are suspending the operation of Catholic Schools (pre-k through 12th) in the diocese beginning Wednesday, March 18, 2020. Pending continuing updates and guidance from local and state government and health officials, we will update all of you regarding this closure on Friday, April 3. This suspension includes all athletic and extracurricular activities.

In the event your school is currently closed for spring vacation, we are asking school officials to be available at your respective school on March 23rd, so parents are able to pick up books and other items to continue their students’ educational programs. We are asking our teachers to establish daily communications with their students and their families so our educational programs will be as effective as possible.

More information will be sent to our principals and their staffs from Dr. Gene Aug as soon as possible. Let us continue to pray for those who are already battling this illness and for those who are working to contain and treat the coronavirus. Know that you and all of our Catholic School families remain in my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edward M. Rice
Bishop of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

Dr. Gene Aug
Interim Superintendent of Schools