



Office of the President

March 17, 2020

Dear Mercy students, families, alumnae, and friends,

Yesterday, we marked a historic milestone: the launch of *Mercy Online*! Between 8 and 8:05 a.m., nearly every Mercy Girl logged onto her home computer, read the announcements and daily prayer, and began her first virtual Mercy class!

In a very short period of time, we have moved all of our teaching and learning into virtual classrooms. In our new reality, students and teachers will follow the school day schedule, attending virtual classes and continuing their academic work in real time. As we planned for the launch, **Principal Jeanne Blakeslee** was reassuring when she said, “Our girls want to learn, and their teachers don’t want to let their students down.”

Ms. Blakeslee was right. Our Mercy Girls and their dedicated teachers have responded in the most grace-filled ways possible to this new reality. From their homes across Baltimore yesterday morning, our students helped their classmates get connected while their teachers delivered their first lessons from dining rooms and home offices transformed into virtual classrooms.

In the weeks ahead, our faculty and staff in partnership with our students and their parents will navigate this new reality together. In a time of great anxiety, we are also seeking to support our girls’ emotional well-being, and so, in addition to the reassuring routine of classes, our counselors are, of course, continuing to be a resource to our girls.

Coordinating our overall campus COVID-19 response is **Dean of Students Mary Ella Franz Marion ’76, P’09** and the taskforce she leads. We have been meeting regularly and will continue to do so via conference calls and video meetings with regular reports to our board of trustees, led by **Kevin G. Burke P’10**. A special page with communications and resources can be found on our website.

The challenges we face are not unique among schools at this extraordinary time in our nation’s history, but I believe that Mercy High School’s response is. Informed by our Mercy, Catholic values and inspired by the courage, vision and excellence of Catherine McAuley, we will deliver to our students and parents what we have promised: An outstanding college preparatory education marked by academic rigor and personal attention and informed by our Mercy values—excellence, hospitality, service, justice, and compassion.

Today we celebrate the Feast of St. Patrick, who brought the peace of Christ to the Irish. On this feast day, be assured of our prayers for peace in your hearts and health in your homes.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Lennon ’85
President