

Greetings ND-BG Community,

We have an incredible opportunity ahead of us. While most Public & Private Schools have been forced to provide their Seniors with virtual or drive through graduation exercises, we have developed a plan to hold an in-person ceremony with families to honor the Class of 2020. Although this ceremony will look and feel slightly different than traditional graduations at ND-BG, the fact that we can join together in person to celebrate our Seniors is in itself a victory. *As we work towards a successful in-person graduation, please be mindful our first priority is to keep everyone safe, while working under restrictions given to us by state, local and church authorities.*

Regrettably, the **Baccalaureate Mass**, traditionally held the evening before Graduation, will experience the most changes. First and foremost, we will not be able to celebrate Mass together this year. After reviewing options and considering St. Paul's, St. Kateri Tekakwitha, and St. John the Evangelist as possible locations, it was simply not feasible to obtain a location that would allow for all families to attend and the space to be cleaned within the allotted time period.

The Baccalaureate Mass will become a Prayer Service this year and will take place at ND-BG on the evening of Friday July 10th at 6pm. More specific information on the format, arrival, and dismissal process for this event will be shared in the near future.

Regarding Graduation, we will return to St. John the Evangelist in Schenectady, NY, for a 9am Graduation Ceremony with Bishop Sharfenberger on July 11th. We are extremely grateful to Fr. Carlino and the entire Parish of SJE for their incredible hospitality.

To comply with State Regulations, along with Diocesan and Parish policies, Graduation will include the following changes:

St John's has been carefully cordoned off to allow for social distancing within the church itself, therefore families will be seated by every other pew. **We will be utilizing every available pew in the Church – including the loft- to make this ceremony possible.**

- Graduates are limited to a total of 7 additional family members to attend.
- Graduates will be seated with their families for the Ceremony, there will be no procession.
- Attendees must register in advance online with the total number of family members attending and contact information for attendees for tracing purposes should the need arise. **An online registration form will be sent out shortly.**
- All attendees must wear masks while in the church and observe social distancing protocols at all times.

- Families will be assigned seating based on upon the numbers of attendees reported to make seating as accommodating as possible.
- All families must leave the Parish Grounds at the conclusion of Graduation.
- Graduation will be live streamed to allow for family and friends to view the ceremony. After its conclusion, the live-stream video will be uploaded to our YouTube channel.
- Graduates will be called forward by name to receive their diplomas and a blessing from Bishop Sharfenberger.

Otherwise, Graduation will proceed as normally as it can. Speeches will be given by our Valedictorian and Salutatorian, Four Year Departmental Awards will be given out, and Bishop Sharfenberger will address the Class of 2020.

There will be a **mandatory practice** for all seniors for graduation on **Thursday July 9th at 10am** in the ND-BG gym. Each student will be required to wear a mask and observe proper social distancing protocols at all times.

We ask for your prayers, cooperation, and support as we work together to provide this Graduation to our students who have already lost so much this year. The ND-BG Community should take pride for ensuring Graduation Exercises will continue despite the pandemic.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kianté E. Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Kianté Jones
Principal
Notre Dame-Bishop Gibbons