

## My Senior Students in Christ at Juan Diego, Judge Memorial, and St. Joseph Catholic High Schools

I want to reach out to you personally and in solidarity with you as we journey through this difficult time together.

It was in March 2017 during your freshman year that I was installed as Bishop of Salt Lake City. During these three years as your bishop, I have come to know many of you as we have prayed together, worshiped Our Lord at Mass together, shared meals together and have had inspiring conversations together. You are the first class who will have completed all four years of high school during my tenure as bishop. Your class holds a special place in my heart. I feel like we are both graduating in a sense!

I am so very proud of each and every one of you. Please do not underestimate the tremendous accomplishment that a high school diploma signifies. I have been honored to walk the halls of your schools, to witness your achievements, to celebrate your victories and to hold strong with you in times of defeat.

It is a twelve plus year journey to receive a high school diploma. I imagine that all of you have been dreaming of your graduation day since day one of your senior year. Many of you have pictured yourselves standing in line on South Temple awaiting the grand procession into our beautiful Cathedral of the Madeleine. You have dreamt of catching a proud teary-eyed glimpse from your parents as you walk down the aisle of our majestic Cathedral. You have envisioned praying at Baccalaureate with hearts filled with gratitude for the privilege of being able to graduate from your premier high school and for the tremendous love and sacrifice of your parents to provide you with this honor.

For many seniors, graduation is a one-day event. However, knowing the tremendous accomplishment that it is, we have made it a tradition in our Catholic community to celebrate graduation over many days. Following Baccalaureate, your schools each hold graduation ceremonies that are based, in some cases, on years and years of tradition, pomp, and circumstance. Over the years I have witnessed the joyous outcries, bullhorns, whistles, and bells from proud and adoring family members as they hear your name called and as they watch as you, dressed in graduation regalia, walk across the stage to receive your diploma--your moment in the sun, your moment to shine! Truly a day that the Lord has made where we all rejoice and are glad!

Due to the circumstances of our current pandemic, I am not able to control so much of what we all might like, what we all wish for and what we have all have come to expect from this special time in your lives. However, what I can do is offer you my pledge that each of our high schools will do everything in their power to bring your heartfelt dreams to reality. I can also do my best to assure you that we will do our very best to acknowledge and honor you as you graduate. Please

know that I am working closely with the principals of your schools to find ways to maintain your cherished traditions and celebrations.

I keep each of you in my prayers. Our faith is what sustains us during difficult times as these. We find ourselves being tested in new and unusual ways. However, we know that we walk by faith and not by sight. We know that we are always in the presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ and that he walks beside us on this journey. I have found in my own life that it is through times such as these that my faith and trust in Jesus Christ flourish.

Will you please join me in praying to Our Lady for her protection guidance and strength during these difficult times?

Hail Mary...