



*Church of Ireland  
United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough*

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Dear Class of 2020

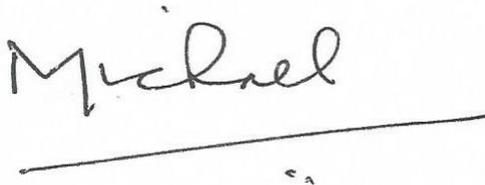
All of you have been very patient over the past months and weeks since any form of gathering in school with your friends was last possible. I want to congratulate you for coping in the ways you all have done. All this time you have not had the chance of being a community and being a very special year group in your school: The Class of 2020. You will have had a very strong focus from the start of the year, your last year in school, and you will have been working hard towards that. You have every reason to be confused by what has happened. And even now when decisions have been made about The Leaving Certificate for this year, there still is confusion. Confusion always raises important issues about fulfilment and fairness. These questions will remain. They are currently beyond your control. I want to encourage you to do some simple things that are within your control. In this way, I am encouraging you to keep control over your own lives in these difficult days of the coronavirus. We continue to live in times that are as dangerous to you as they are to me and to everyone else. We all need to stay safe.

The first thing I ask you to do is to honour your own talents and gifts. Many of these you have had to set to one side over the last two months but the day will return when you will be able to use them and to celebrate and share them publicly in a different sort of world that will open before you. You have the energy for this world. You have no need to fear this world. You need to remember that you have everything to offer. The world has changed before your eyes to a world that feels a lot more closed in. In whatever ways others, who are also doing their best, to care for your future, they too are caught in the eye of a public health pandemic that has neither secure science nor viable vaccine.

The second thing I ask you to do is to hold on to your life goals. In fact, I'd go further and suggest that you write them down either in a journal or in your phone in case you forget what they are at this time. Sometimes frustration can bring to the fore the clearest expression of what matters most to us. These life goals you will have developed partly by building them up gradually, partly by flashes of insight of your own and partly by the example of others. You may still want to be and to do what you wanted when you first entered secondary school. Your ideas may have changed. Both are entirely valid. But most of all these goals are your goals and they are precious for that very reason. There is no good reason for them to disappear. Please hold on to them and nurture them.

The third thing I ask you to do is to retain your friendship group. For some of us this is family, for others it is a smaller or a larger group of friends with whom we have shared interests and ideas and good fun inside and outside of school. Please continue to talk and to work your way through these very difficult times. Together you have more energy than you have individually. This energy you can still bring to this wonderful time in your lives. Many people look to you for inspiration. I encourage you to look after yourselves, not to give way to disappointment. I encourage you to enjoy your life, your family and friends. Remember that you are special and important to Ireland today and the Ireland of tomorrow.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a long, thin horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

+Michael  
Archbishop of Dublin