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Dear Members of the Diocesan Community,

Sudden barks and purrs of beloved family pets, the cry of hungry babies, the variety of creative virtual backgrounds. These are just a few delights in this new era of online learning. For the past weeks I have been able to visit teachers and students through the Zoom platform and witness a wide spectrum of personalities and pedagogical styles. From teachers who utilise almost every imaginable household appliance in their lesson demonstrations to expert insights by national-level athletes and coaches. From detailed analysis of Ancient Chinese poets to dissecting English terminologies through world events. From graphical explanations of mathematical principles to practical matters in Innovation and Design. From pragmatic suggestions in safety and hygiene to discovering the Classics through Ancient Martial Arts novels. Now more than ever, our teachers strive to equip our boys not only in book knowledge, but also holistically. The only disappointment, on a personal level, was that one class I visited did not have a single Arsenal fan!

In our fight against the Coronavirus, Hong Kong citizens have been highly vigilant in public safety and personal hygiene. In our city, as in the rest of the world, we are indebted to our medical professionals for safeguarding the lives of so many in the community. They are the most qualified to guide us through these times of unprecedented turmoil. We owe these professionals our highest respect and we are grateful to them for their leadership and sacrifice.

Please remember that whatever we do, we are not only protecting ourselves, we are protecting those around us. It is at times like these when we must remember that all citizens exist as a collective. In safeguarding one, we are safeguarding the whole.

Life has been, for most of us, filled with assignments, projects and deadlines. Our attention is often monopolised by the news and social media algorithms. These headlines and details invoke our sense of justice and call us to action. These feeds, by and large, helped set our priorities. But then came the Coronavirus without warning, barging through our doors and turning almost all aspects of our lives upside down. Things that had usually enraptured us by habit came to a screeching halt - our favorite sports teams have stopped competing, our usual modes of entertainment have stopped and social events that took up big parts of our lives suddenly ceased to exist. It is almost as if the entire world is taking a big timeout.

In this crisis, there also comes a golden opportunity to contemplate what is truly essential in our lives.

There is no fault in putting effort in the short term: Good grades and achievement in extracurricular activities are important, but all the lessons you learn here must help establish something more long lasting. Your teachers, your big brothers will always walk with but they can only do so much. You have to pick up the baton and run with it. Now is the perfect time: take a deep breath and examine what is most essential to you.

Gear up and equip yourself. Adapt and overcome. We want all of us to some day look back into these tumultuous months and be able to say that we have re-trained our focus on what is truly important. Let us rise together. Start now and keep going - Work on one more formula, practice a couple more rounds, read for 5 more minutes, take a few more steps. Help someone in need. Just show up.

There is one verse that describes Jesus' adolescent life: "... Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man". Does that sound familiar? In fact, adolescent Christ was the consummate all-rounder - He made sure his will is aligned with his Holy Father's; he became learned and wise; he developed himself physically to face the rigors of life; and he connected with his fellow men in a profound and meaningful way. All that preparation made it possible for him to accomplish his mission in 3 years, with only 12 (11) men by his side. Jesus was sent on Earth to be our example, and as we go through these defining hours together, it would not go amiss to follow in his footsteps and discover His perfect plan is for us, so that through us, His kingdom could truly be established on this earth.

Though we stand physically apart for a moment, we will stand forever united in spirit.

Godspeed, till we meet again on the Hill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.K.Y. Cheng', written in a cursive style.

R.K.Y. Cheng
Headmaster