



October 30, 2020

Dear Clergy and Religious

In 2016, as St. George Parish School struggled with the twin issues of declining enrollment and financial viability, Bishop Blaire had a vision. He wanted to find a way to better serve the Catholic parishes of South Stockton in the education, formation, and evangelization of children, young adults, and families; and so he initiated a conversation regarding a cross-parish collaboration project, which would include the transformation of St. George's Parish School into a diocesan regional school serving the communities of St. George, St. Linus, St. Edward, St. Gertrude and St. Mary of the Assumption parishes. Since 2016, this has been an ongoing dialogue, with the project taking form in 2018 under Bishop Cotta. Over the past 18 months, the diocese has been able to take significant steps to lay the groundwork for the regional school.

- In February of 2019, the St. George School community participated in a town hall to provide input on the future of the school.
- In November of 2019, a steering committee developed a draft of the mission and 3-year goals for a regional school.
- In early 2020, I approved a governance model for the regional school, including a Board of Directors to supervise the new legal entity.
- In the fall of 2020, the pastors of the regional parishes committed to supporting and participating in the regional school.

Between now and the end of this calendar year, the diocese will finalize the name, entity, structure and strategic plans for the academy. For the current school and parish communities of St. George, this transition will be mostly behind the scenes, with the school remaining on the St. George campus and being served by the same administration and staff. For the parish communities of St. Linus, St. Edward, St. Gertrude and St. Mary, they will be hearing much more about this expanded invitation to participate in Catholic education. *Enrollment efforts will begin in January of 2021; and the doors of our first Diocesan regional school will officially open in August 2021!*

The launching of an elementary school that serves and is supported by multiple parishes is a milestone for our diocese. It is an example of my vision for us to work together As One. Please join me in celebrating the progress we have made so far and in praying for the continued success of the regional school project. If you would like further information about this project, please contact Marian Graham, our Director for Catholic Schools, at mgraham@stocktondiocese.org or 209 466 0636.

In the Peace of Christ,

Most Reverend Myron J. Cotta
Roman Catholic Bishop of Stockton