



*'Lucere et Ardere'*

31 March 2020

Dear Parents and Members of the Aquinas Community

This is a brief update on how things are going at Aquinas.

Students are learning to adjust to the new normal. Practices that seemed strange as recently as a week ago are now just taken as par for the course: requirements such as lining up for meals on dots spaced 1.5 metres apart, holding conversations from a distance, limits on the number of people in rooms, four people on tables that could take eight or ten. And everyone seems to have mastered 'Zoom'. Who had heard of it a month ago?

As I indicated last week, our emphasis has been to establish routine and to focus students on their university courses as their principal interest. That is going well. The days are marked by a wonderful spirit of study. They may achieve their best results ever! By and large, there has been enormous good will from the students, although some have found themselves chafing a little against the new yolks that have found slipped over them. I expect that those few will soon come to terms with the new reality that will be with all of us for months. Certainly, it is a considerable adjustment for many: they are vivacious, gregarious and fun-loving young adults, and their world has been abruptly changed.

Although more restrictions have reduced what is possible for outdoor games, most students seem to making good arrangements for their physical exercise. We have started to make available extra resources and activities to support them emotionally and spiritually.

Despite the scaling up of social restrictions, we continue to go about our daily life. About 75% of students remain at College, which is considerably more than just about everywhere else. They obviously value being with one another, and the structures and support of Aquinas. We hope that we can continue to provide this community experience for them and help them to achieve their best. Last night we asked students to give us an indication of their plans for the next week, for the mid-semester break, and for next term. Obviously, these can only be provisional, but the information will help our planning and modelling, especially for what we will be able to do financially.

Thank you, once again, for the many affirming messages we are receiving. I can only reciprocate them by thanking you for the confidence that you show in our staff – both our professional team and also our outstanding student leaders.

Yours sincerely

**Brother Michael Green FMS**  
*RECTOR*