



MIRIAM COLLEGE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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2 August 2021

Dear Parents and Students,

First of all, let us welcome you to another academic year! I am writing this letter, on behalf of the other administrators and faculty members, as another lockdown is scheduled to start. This lockdown is sending us the message that all is not going well as expected despite the vaccinations. Last year was painful enough with several deaths among family members in our community, and so it is understandable if all of us face the coming months with trepidation.

As one big family, we, your family at Miriam College, have taken steps to help you (the parents) and your children (our students) cope better with the demands of a situation which seems difficult to control. Aware that being locked down can trigger emotional and psychological stresses, we have taken measures to assist you in crucial areas as we make sure that the quality of education that our students will get this school year is the best we can give, and that it will also continue to improve:

1. Improving Academic Learning Experience - The Unit Heads have done preparations to give your children an improved learning experience this school year. In 2020-2021, the evaluation of the KNOLLER platform for online distance learning (ODL) received generally good ratings from our students as well as from the parents/learning partners of our younger learners. This year, the administrators and management teams are committed to improving our program offerings for ODL Year 2, and the teachers have gone through their in-service training with one major goal in mind: make learning an enjoyable experience without sacrificing quality.

2. Expanding Financial Arrangements to Ease Budget Pressure - We are aware that a significant number of our students' parents are undergoing additional pressures due to the unpredictability of the pandemic; and whenever a lockdown is imposed, families relying on their enterprises or on providing face to face services get the brunt of the financial pain because their tasks and services cannot be done from home. Last year, we initiated an 8-month payment system to help ease the financial stress of these families. For this year, the School has worked for a special arrangement with BPI and BDO Credit Card Companies for special installment plan with reduced interest rates for payment of school fees of your children. It is our sincere hope that this payment arrangement will meet your needs while allowing the School to meet its own obligations within its fiscal year.

3. Supporting Psychological and Emotional Health - Our counselors have created innovative ways to help keep the students' mental wellness at an optimum level so that they can perform well in school. Guidance and Counseling have transitioned to Telebehavioral Health approaches---using usual standards of care but utilizing digital platforms to provide secure, audio-video conferencing to communicate with a student in real-time. Emotional support services cover telecounseling, launching of the MC Wellness Zone---our selfcare portal, weekly postings of support and motivational messages sent via email or private groups, holding virtual Empathy Circles, webinars on Resilience, partnering with the in-house psychologist and psychiatrist for the



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management of students' psychological concerns. An add-on service, *Tawag Buhay*, was set up where volunteer Knollers who have an experience in counseling, make themselves available for HEU (college) students who may just want to talk about non-clinical needs. You may wish to visit:

<https://mcgcowellnesszone.wixsite.com/mcgcowellnesszone>

<https://www.mc.edu.ph/highered/gco>

4. Preserving Family Well-Being - The Family Studies program and the Center for Peace Education, have come up with vlogs and short videos on psychological health and family well-being. These may be accessed and shared through the MC Family Studies YouTube channel. Expect that some of these will be sent to you monthly through an email from MC Communications. Webinars designed for busy parents will continue this school year, commencing on the 21st of September with "Inner Peace: the Heartbeat of World Peace."

5. Deepening Spirituality and Faith in the Lord - Lastly, we also wish to assist everybody by giving opportunities to strengthen their faith and spiritual lives. Inspirational messages, simple prayer guides or reflections are shared regularly by the Campus Ministry Offices in the different units. Moreover, Prayer Walls have also been created for the community as sacred and safe spaces where members may share prayers and spiritual insights. These Prayer Walls may be accessed through these links:

<https://padlet.com/gisidro1/MCprayerwall> and <https://padlet.com/mjavier1965/6e729csiwx0p8os>

In addition, students may wish to go for spiritual accompaniment. It is a one-on-one conversation with their campus minister or with a selected formation partner. Its purpose is for the students to have a co-journeyer (*kalakbay*), if they wish to deepen their prayer lives. Regular group prayer sessions are being calendared this coming school year in various academic units, so students may have another support system in hurdling online learning. A portal in the KNOLLER is being set up to provide a hub for all these services to support the spiritual formation of our students.

I end this letter with words from Henry Nouwen as we reflect on what is happening around us:

Something very deep and mysterious, very holy and sacred, is taking place in our lives right where we are, and the more attentive we become the more we will begin to see and hear it . . . the more we will discover—and uncover---a new presence in our lives.

With our sincere prayers and fervent hopes for everybody's well-being and peace

Sincerely,

AMBASSADOR LAURA Q. DEL ROSARIO, M.A., M.Ed.

President