12 March 2020

Dear Xavier Community,

Greetings from Mabuchi Hill.

I write with an update regarding COVID-19 and its global and local impact. As you are surely aware, this situation which is developing rapidly, and we are closely monitoring it, as most people are.

Yesterday, the Congress of the Federated States of Micronesia removed the travel restrictions enacted for the FSM, other than those travelling from the Hubei Province of the People’s Republic of China. In effect, this ends the external quarantine that has been in place for several weeks. While this is a decision on the national level, individual FSM states may enact their own quarantine measures, as Pohnpei has already done.

With this new development, I feel as though we need to update our community with how we plan on proceeding.

Knowing that changes are unfolding rapidly—sometimes by the minute—we do not feel as though adjusting the daily life of school is warranted at this time. That may change, however, and it may change quickly. If and when it does, I promise I will disseminate the pertinent information as soon as those changes occur.

It’s important to realize that distorted facts and ignored realities are part of life in this instant information age. We in Micronesia and at Xavier are not inoculated from the anxiety such falsities can produce. I ask everyone, then, to please refrain from speculation about how the next days, months, and weeks will unfold. Be especially careful about distribution of rumors on social media, as inaccuracies there tend to spread quicker than elsewhere. If anyone needs specific information, please write to me directly at baker@xaviermicronesia.org.

Let’s make sure that we continue to pray for a swift end to this pandemic, and that it does not reach these islands we love.

Thank you.

For Xavier,

Rev. Dennis M. Baker, S.J.