

Hi friends at St. Marks!!!

My goodness, you all have brought so much joy to my heart these past couple of months, your notes, your videos, and your prayers! So much joy and love seems to fill your school hallways and I cannot wait to visit all of you and have you show me your beautiful school and parish. I have given this note to Mrs. Denvir to read to you all because well... it has been far too long of receiving from you all without my having given back! And it really is too difficult to write a personal note to each of you, I tried... but goodness, I hadn't realized how many new friends God blessed me with so quickly! Many of you wrote beautiful, kind notes, drew pictures, sent prayers – and I promise I have kept each and every card. Anytime I feel lonely or I forget God's immense love I look through some of your cards and I can't help but smile.

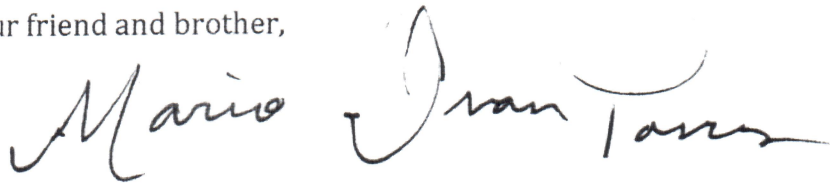
I hope you will remember that kind words and kind gestures make incredible impacts in peoples lives, and I pray you show each and everyone of your classmates that same love and support – you are brothers and sisters in Christ! Don't forget how integral you are to one another.

Some of you will notice that I have finished rosaries for TWO classes, but not for every one! If you were privileged to receive on of these first rosaries, I hope you begin to pray with them soon, and can carry them with you to show all you meet of your loyalty and love for our Blessed Mother who leads us to Christ. For those of you who have yet to receive a rosary bracelet... take hope and see that I have made many already! Even more take hope because I am making yours now, and I am praying for you as I make it. Hopefully the Christmas break away from school will give me the chance to finish the rest – my mom may be helping me! (Which I think is really neat, especially since we look to Mary, the mother of Jesus to help us.)

Thank Mrs. Bartz, the Librea family and Mrs. Denvir for donating the beautiful twine for these rosaries! It surely has been a collective effort, and even the other seminarians are excited that I have the chance to make so many rosary bracelets for you all!

I pray your advent prepares you well to open your hearts to receiving our incarnational Lord, God bless and may you have a joy filled Christmas!

Your friend and brother,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mario Ivan Torres". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. "Mario" is on the left, "Ivan" is in the middle, and "Torres" is on the right, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of "Torres".

Ivan Torres