



## Family and School Association Newsletter

March, 2018

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A blessed Easter to you and to your family. May the Lord bless you and those you love. This is usually a time to write of Easter issues, however, with the recent school shootings and the resultant uproar, it is necessary to talk about our Church, school and family response to the heartbreaking situation.

### **An Issue of Great importance**

Every aspect of the media – TV, radio, newspapers, Facebook, etc. – have been covering one or another perspective of the horrific school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Young people, actually the victims, God bless them, have risen and said, “Enough is enough!” Their actions have triggered a national outcry to put in place measures that will keep our schools, Churches, streets, playgrounds and buildings safer than they have been in recent years.

The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) and the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), both of which have addressed violence before, have made some new statements since the Parkland shootings. Following is an excerpt from the NCEA statement:

*These are indeed turbulent times, and as an educational association rooted in gospel values, the National Catholic Education Association stands in solidarity with those who would be agents of change and conversion in a culture of violence that is destroying innocent lives.*

Further NCEA says that we need to pray, to dialogue regarding our differences and to act, reviewing safety procedures and advocating nationally and locally for laws and policy that can help prevent further tragedies.

In partnership, USCCB, NCEA and the Council for Private Education (CAPE) are monitoring and supporting bills in Congress that aim to provide resources for school violence prevention to assure that they include equitable services for Catholic and private school students and teachers.

In a communique to Chicago Archdiocesan schools asking them to take part in the March 14 national anti-violence movement, Superintendent Jim Rigg wrote, *At times such as these our Catholic faith leads us to seek solace and strength in prayer and fellowship and solidarity with those who are wounded and suffering great loss...Please make certain that all activities are safe and age appropriate.*



Top left to right: Immaculate Conception St. Joseph School, St. Bartholomew School, Sacred Heart Schools. Bottom left to right: St. Rita of Cascia High School, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy

While each school has been asked to respond in a manner appropriate to their community, there are things that can be done in the home to assist our families in violence awareness and prevention:

- Be alert to unusual, unhealthy or dangerous behavior in family members or friends and alert appropriate authorities.
- Teach your children that it is not “snitching” to share information regarding worrisome behavior of a peer or of anyone else. Rather, it could be life-saving.
- Promote dialogue in your home to solve differences, not violent behavior.
- If your child or your child’s friend experiences a significant loss (ex., death of a parent) or personal failure (ex., breakup with a boy/girlfriend) carefully check their behavior and mood in the following days and weeks.
- Monitor your child’s social media use to minimize violent content. Research is mixed regarding the relationship between violent content and aggression. Don’t take a chance!
- Assess your child’s relationships and be sure someone is playing the necessary “trusted confidant” role. It might not necessarily be a parent/guardian and that is OK.
- Be sure your child is getting enough sleep and is using only a healthy amount of screen time. Social media use is cutting into some children’s needed sleep time.
- Talk to your child about “how life is going.” Do that even if your child is at an age when he/she is not so willing to talk to a parent or guardian. You will be giving the message that you care.
- Pray for peace together in your home.

Again - have a blessed Easter season.