March 2018

Dear School Community Members in the Diocese of Syracuse,

It becomes more difficult to recognize and face a stark reality that our society is one where we witness violence and killing on a much too regular basis. Our schools and gathering places, both public and private, have all been scarred by the scorn of violence and the innocent loss of life. School and church shootings, as well as community gathering places, have all fallen victim to these senseless occurrences.

It is important to recognize that we are actively reviewing and practicing safe and secure actions within our schools in the Diocese of Syracuse. In the past several weeks and throughout the spring, we will continue to implement, practice and review the following.

1. Review all practices and safeguards that are presently in place in each of our Catholic schools.

2. Rehearse and conduct fire, intruder, lock out and all other drills necessary to maintain safe school environments during and before/after school.

3. Conduct inspections of all school facilities and grounds with diocesan facility, maintenance, risk-management and administration to see and hear present practices and equipment that are in place at each school location.

4. Conduct a diocesan-wide inventory of each of our schools for current practices as well as physical safeguards and barriers in place within our schools.

5. Attend and actively participate with other school and law enforcement authorities where discussions and strategy sessions will result in practices and equipment that will provide additional safeguards and protections for our schools.

6. Reinforce to all students, staff, parents and community members to be vigilant and mindful of unusual or threatening individual(s), surroundings or statements made about or to any person, place or activity within our school or school community.

We call upon everyone in our Catholic schools to assist by communicating within our buildings and our diocese. We encourage all to notify any school authority of situations or individuals who are suspected of being a threat or could bring violence to any one of our schools. Our schools have very good relations with our local law enforcement and we will continue to strengthen that relation while we experience calm within our schools.
We would be naive to think that our Catholic schools are fully and completely insulated or secure from acts of violence. However, we do believe that we continue to provide a learning environment that is safe, secure and also welcomes all those desiring a faith-centered education in the Diocese of Syracuse. Being mindful of our collective efforts, we welcome your input in the ongoing discussions about school safety.

Sincerely, Yours in Christ,

[Signature]

William W. Crist
Superintendent of Schools