



November 9, 2022

Yesterday the epidemic of gun violence impacted a school community within the boundaries of our archdiocese as one young person was killed at Ingraham High School in Seattle. Its proximity is a stark reminder that no school is immune from this possibility. When parents entrust their children to us, it is a reminder that we cannot promise with 100 percent certainty that the prospect of such violence will never befall our own community.

What we can promise is **preparedness**. We will use the best information and practices available, consulting with subject matter experts when possible, to inform our emergency response plans. We can collaborate across schools to learn better ways to keep our children safe. We will train our staffs in these response protocols and engage in appropriate drills to help prepare the students we serve.

We can promise **advocacy and prayer**. We must be advocates for school safety in all schools. We need to teach the truth that we are all created in the image and likeness of God. We need to call on our political leaders to place the right to life and to live before other rights and advocate for laws and policies that seek to be proactive as a measure of prevention against future tragedies.

Most importantly, we can promise **love**. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us: "Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is loved. Each of us is willed. Each of us is necessary." When I walk into our schools, I am witness to school cultures that believe this. I observe principals and teachers, teaching assistants and office managers, custodians and development directors, who strive to welcome students and families into cultures of belonging rooted in a deep sense of community where students are known, loved, and recognized.

The great mystery of the Trinity reveals that God *is* relationship. We are most like God when we are in relationship. This is where our strength lies – in our communities, in our classrooms, in our families. It is when we are together that we echo the divine in our midst, and in this togetherness is the realization that each of us is willed, loved, and necessary.

We cannot guarantee that we will not face tragedy, but we can control our preparedness, our advocacy, our prayer, and our love to create safe environments for our students and staff. In these difficult days, let us turn to our communion in ministry as a source of consolation and continue to lead with faith, hope, and charity. I am,

Yours faithfully,

Nicholas Ford
Superintendent