

DAUGHTERS of CHARITY
OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL



Public Statement in Response to Parkland, Florida Shooting

Loss of life through violence is never acceptable. It is particularly abhorrent when our young are taken at the dawn of their full potential. The Daughters of Charity of the United States are overwhelmed, saddened and outraged at the loss of life last week in Parkland, FL. This tragedy is not an isolated occurrence but indicative of our societal woundedness - a woundedness which can only be fully healed through respectful engagement.

We understand it is not the gun which creates the carnage but the person using the gun. To that end, we call on our elected officials, community leaders and fellow members of society to move toward creating a safer environment in our schools, streets, public forums and places of work by:

1. Controlling access to weapons by any individual identified as someone who might misuse a weapon. That includes a history of illegal activity, mental illness, and those already flagged on national security data bases (Including our nation's "no-fly" list). This background check must be required for all transactions including gun shows and private sales.
2. Reducing the risk of mass murders by banning semi-automatic assault weapons with high-capacity magazines and other weaponry with capability of inflicting mass carnage.
3. Repairing the tears in the fabric of our society and rebuilding communal support for the person on the periphery, the lonely, and the person showing signs of distress. We are called to be a kinder, gentler society.

As Daughters of Charity and members of the Vincentian Family, we are driven by our Founders' call to work for systemic change and to provide a voice for the voiceless. As Christians we are called to sow love and acceptance of all and to protect those who cannot protect themselves. In the end we are left with a very clear path to redemption, "What you do to the least of My people, you do unto Me." Mt 25:45 (NAB)

All members of today's society must take responsibility for what comes next. The poet and philosopher George Santayana first suggested, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." We say, "*Those who ignore the past will be held accountable for its inevitable repetition.*"

We applaud the young adults and youth who are energizing a movement toward safer communities. We continue our prayers for those who lost their lives and offer our sincere condolences for those who will forever be broken by the tragedy in Parkland, Florida.

The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul of the United States of America comprises two Provinces with sisters serving in health care, education and social services.

For more information about this and other social justice positions of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul -USA contact: Sister Margaret Louise Brown, D.C., at srmlbrown@doc1633.org.