



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



MEMORANDUM

To: Pastors, Parochial Administrators, Principals and Business Managers
From: Bishop Michael F. Olson
Date: November 8, 2017
Re: Church and School Security Concerns

In the wake of the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs horrific shooting that resulted in death and injury, some parishioners of the Diocese have been expressing concerns about church and school security. It is understandable that such concerns would arise because of all the senseless violence around the country.

To ensure that each church and school in the Diocese has good safety and security procedures in place, each pastor, parochial administrator, principal or business manager must contact as soon as possible the appropriate law enforcement agency for their area to request the agency to review the following:

1. The current safety and security procedures of each parish and school to assess their effectiveness;
2. The physical layout of each church and school to determine what physical enhancements can be implemented, if any, to improve safety and security; and
3. Whether the addition of on-site security, either off-duty law enforcement officers or private security guards, is advisable.

Because the Diocese is comprised of 90 parishes and 19 schools across 28 counties of North Texas, each location will have unique safety and security needs. If a parish or school determines on-site security is preferred, the security can be provided by off-duty law enforcement officers or private security guards. In most instances, private security guard service is less costly. A new state law allows churches to have armed “volunteer” security present in the place of worship. Because of the liability this involves, the Diocese does not permit volunteer armed security to be utilized. Please inform this office when you have completed your reviews and what, if any, enhancements have been made to your safety and security procedures.

As shepherds, we must protect the flock that has been entrusted to us. Please proceed with God’s speed in ensuring proper safety and security procedures are in place at your parish or school.

Yours in Christ.

THE CATHOLIC CENTER