

SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL . . .

ON A SPIRITUAL NOTE

Dear Parish Family,

Each parent and individual has their own way of dealing with tragic news, AND how to share or not share it. I simply want to encourage you to be mindful that because this terrible event took place in our State, County and Diocese, though we are not first responders, we can still be traumatized. We want to and should do our best to protect the children from trauma which is difficult to do with the instant information via TV, internet and adult conversations. I am confident of your parental wisdom because of your education and lived experience and your unique relationship with your children, however, even the best of plans between mom and dad, school and home never unfold perfectly and if not yet, then in the future our kids will hear, learn and then imagine what, when, how and why this happened. I just want to encourage you to do your best to go gently, be mindful as adults of your rightful and understandable feelings and how they can effect your normal routine. If you need to talk, don't hold it in. Please find another adult: your spouse, a friend, peer, parents, or me to debrief. We can live in Seattle, Westport or Newtown and still be deeply traumatized, saddened, and upset. We are all human first, so please go gently, be kind to yourselves, to all you love and work with and above all please be patient with those who wish to talk about it and those who don't.

Down the road conversations and debates about how best to respond, react, adjust to the Sandy Hook Massacre of 20 first graders and their 6 teachers will continue. Let us do our best to permit fellow citizens and even family members to have an opinion even if it differs radically from ours. We shall all pray that as time passes our nation will find a way to do what is best for the common good which is the protection of all of us, especially our children. It is about balance...between facing the tragic truth and moving on. Remembering yet still celebrating Christmas. Hurting on the inside and wearing a smile on the outside. Protecting one another without frightening one another. A delicate balancing of dealing with the unfairness of life and the beauty of life. This balance is an art and many of you as parents have mastered and practice this art...that is why your children and our parish is so blessed!

I lead you in prayers for the 26 families, really 27, directly impacted by this great sorrow and prayers for each one of us that we allow the heartaches in life to make us better and never bitter, more compassionate, understanding and when necessary forgiving...when we model this as adults it is a primary way to protect our children...they see us, hear us, watch us and even notice how we feel. I have always been confident that the individual families in our parish are blessed with parents who teach their children very well, rarely by words...mostly by deeds. May God, who is love, comfort and console you and bring healing and peace back to our nation state, county, diocese and parish.

Sincerely in the Lord,

*Father Tom,
Pastor*