



JESUITS
West

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Dear Companions in School Leadership,

I write this letter with hopes and prayers for peace for you and the young people you serve in our schools. This past week I have been horrified and deeply saddened by the mass shooting in Parkland, Florida.

At the same time, I am heartened that young people who endured that hell-ish ordeal are speaking directly to power. They are tweeting things to our president like, “I don’t want your condolences . . . my friends and teachers were shot. Multiple of my fellow classmates are dead. Do something instead of sending prayers. Prayers won’t fix this. But gun control will prevent it from happening again.”

“Do something.” These words reverberate in my heart. “Do something.”

I do not know what I ask of you. Except that you might ask yourselves in your school to “do something,” that we will ask ourselves in the CSL network of 18 schools in Jesuits West to “do something,” and that perhaps the large number of schools in the Jesuits Schools Network will ask ourselves to “do something.” What can we do?

In our Vision, Mission, and Values document, we claim that one of our commitments in all apostolic settings is that we “Leverage our institutions and networks of relationships in favor of the poor and vulnerable.” I believe that the “vulnerable” at this moment in time are our country’s young people. They are the young people in our very schools and in our schools across the country.

Can we find some way to show our solidarity with the young people of Parkland, Florida? Can our own young people use this terrible event to make a claim on us adults? Can we adults make a covenant to our young people that we will do what adults should do, which is all we can do keep these horrific events from happening again?

The same student who tweeted above, later tweeted to the president, “I heard you are coming to my community soon. I would love for you to hear my opinions on gun control in person.”

I would like to ask you to use this opportunity to open yourselves to the opinions and feelings of our young people. What do they feel about this terrible event? What do they feel about guns? Do they make a claim on us adults? Please listen closely to their voices and find some way for them, in their own voices, to speak to me and to us of Jesuits West. I trust you to determine the best way to engage the young people and listen to them. I look forward to hearing from you what you have heard.

I believe we need to listen to our young people and let them lead us. If we are to leverage our institutions in their favor, I trust they will show us the way. My hope is that if we listen to them it will lead us all to a deeper commitment and covenant on the part of the adults of this country to our young people to protect them and their valuable, beautiful lives.

Gratefully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Scott Santarosa, S.J." in a cursive, stylized font.

Scott Santarosa, S.J.
Provincial