

The New Moment

August 3, 2018

Parish and Institutional Security

Dear Priests, Parish Staff, School Administrators, and Parish Safety Coordinators,

A recent letter from Bishop Pates provided direction on addressing the issues of safety and security within the parishes and affiliated schools of the Des Moines Diocese. The letter mentioned that I was hired to assist with the planning, so I would like to take the opportunity to introduce myself and provide some information on upcoming planning efforts.

For the past several years, I have been working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as well as numerous state and local governments and consultation for private organizations on community-based planning initiatives. I am certified as a trainer by the U.S. Department of Education Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools/Technical Assistance Center (REMS/TA) and provide guidance to assist schools with the emergency operations planning process required by Iowa Code.

My work focuses specifically on assisting organizations with assessment of their existing response capabilities, identification of threats, and drafting of emergency operations plans. One component of this planning process includes addressing facility security as outlined in Bishop Pates' letter. The emergency operations planning assistance being offered by the Diocese will focus on processes that incorporate parish, school, and family preparedness with those of the emergency response partners in your community; thereby, resulting in a fully comprehensive community-based plan.

In my experience, the initial thought of taking on such an effort could seem overwhelming. In fact, attempting to accomplish such a task can be daunting and confusing without some understanding of emergency operations planning and technical assistance. I will be walking you through the process in a step-by-step procedure that I hope you will find both informational and enjoyable. We will begin with a 2-hour workshop that will provide you with an overview of the planning process. The Diocesan staff is working to secure the locations and dates for these workshops, but most will occur in September. The workshops will assist you with the selection of your planning team and explain the importance of collaborating with community partners. We will then work through the process via webinars over the next few months to ensure that both the parish and the affiliated schools have a completed plan by June 2019. Additional information regarding access to these webinars will be provided at the September workshops.

I would suggest you begin by identifying an individual who will lead the planning effort within your parish over the next 10-12 months. It is not necessary that this individual have a background in emergency management, but a willingness to lead, learn, listen, and collaborate is

helpful. It will be most helpful if you send the contact information for this person to me at the email address below as soon as you can.

I am looking forward to the opportunity to work with you on this important project and am excited about the direction in which God is leading us! If you have immediate questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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