

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the wake of the recent gun violence in our country we have put in place some additional security measures at OLR. Our school headmaster, Mr. Curtin has employed local deputy sheriffs to provide security during school hours, and we have done the same for campus security during weekend Mass times. To help fund this we will have a second collection next weekend, October 4/5.

As part of the review of security our ushers are regularly trained to assist. With this in mind, we are also reviewing security of our campus buildings. Our Director of Facilities, David Bernard, is the person to oversee locks and keys, and Donna Craft, our Director of Communications, is the person to contact to book the facilities for all events.

The matter of “security” has a theological implication also. In the Evangelical Protestant religion in which I was raised there was a doctrine called “eternal security”. This is the belief that once a person has repented and accepted the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ their eternal destiny was sealed. They were bound for heaven and that personal salvation could not be lost. In other words, “Once Saved Always Saved”. The advantage of this belief is that it lodges one’s confidence in Christ’s saving work - no matter what happens he will see you safely home to heaven.

The problem with the doctrine of “Eternal security” is that it contradicts common sense. If we have the freedom to accept Christ’s saving work it follows that we also have the freedom, after accepting his mercy, of rejecting it through our sinful actions or through a conscious rejection of the faith. The Catholic faith never contradicts common sense even though it often transcends common sense. Catholics reject the Protestant doctrine of eternal security because it undermines our free will.

Nevertheless, the Catholic faith does offer a sense of security for the eternal future. While we do not believe in “once saved always saved” we have confidence that if we are in a state of grace that we are on the right path to heaven. By repenting, trusting in the Lord and living by the precepts of the Church and the Ten Commandments we can have confidence that, by God’s grace, we are heading to heaven. If our hearts and lives are oriented toward God, then his presence will be our final destination.

When we are on a journey one of the things we do is to regularly study the map, look for landmarks and guideposts, check our progress, and correct wrong turnings and missteps. Regular Examination of Conscience and Confession are the ways we check the map and correct our course.

As Catholics we may not have the false comfort of “eternal security”, but we do have the confidence of faith—that if we walk in God’s way we will one day be with him.

Your Pastor,  
Fr. Longenecker