

**Special Edition
April 2018**



NorAm

The Edmund Rice Christian
Brothers North America
Mission Frère - Advocacy
Newsletter

Answering the call for students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School to speak out, Edmund Rice Christian Brothers' Schools from North America and across the global Edmund Rice Network took action by remembering the lives of the victims of the Parkland, FL school shooting and standing with them in solidarity by calling for action by government leaders in the United States.



Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America
A Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers

February 26, 2018

Dear School Leaders,

Each year, the Lenten season offers us a unique opportunity to reflect on the life, passion, death and Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ in light of our lived present day realities. This year is no different. The recent school shooting in Parkland, FL has once again given us pause to step back and wonder how our society has gotten to the point of allowing senseless killings in schools across the United States to go unchallenged.

The 2014 Christian Brothers Congregation Chapter in Nairobi, Kenya calls upon us *“to engage in advocacy with the voiceless, the marginalized and all that are oppressed.”* In recent days, young people have taken up the task of speaking out against gun violence and the deaf ears of our President, members of Congress and the NRA who seemingly ignore the cries of our children to curb the gun violence that mars our society and threatens their pursuit of an education without fear of being attacked in what should be a sacred and safe environment for them.

The mass shooting in Florida has ignited calls for action by young people aimed at encouraging lawmakers to pass tougher gun laws that can serve to deter such violence. At this time, I am aware of three such calls to action. The organizers behind the recent Women's March have called for a 17-minute walkout on March 14th to protest Congress' inaction concerning the gun violence plaguing our schools. A *National Student Walkout* is being planned for March 24th so that students can participate in *A March for Our Lives* on that day in Washington, DC. And finally, the Network for Public Education announced a national day of action, saying: “on Friday, April 20th, we want students to attend school and then promptly WALK-OUT at 10:00 am. Sit outside your schools and peacefully protest. Make some noise. Voice your thoughts - We are students, we are victims, we are change.”

As Province Leader of the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America Province, I am encouraging our school leaders to allow the students in our Edmund Rice Schools to participate responsibly in the planned events for these dates. I call on our schools to take advantage of this opportunity in allowing our children to be heard. With proper guidance, these days can be a great teaching moment for our students in understanding how our democracy works and in allowing their voices to join in with their peers across the United States. By doing so as a *Consortium of Edmund Rice Schools*, we speak as one voice in advocating for our greatest asset – the young people in our care.

Lenten blessings,

Bro. Kevin M. Griffith, CFC
Edmund Rice Christian Brothers North America, Province Leader



Tampa Catholic High School

a tradition of Faith, Excellence & Family



Tampa Catholic at its Finest

"A Memorial Tribute to the Lives Lost at Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School in Parkland"

Commemorating the one-month anniversary of the tragedy in Parkland, high school students across the nation participated in walkouts, marches and demonstrations today to memorialize the tragic loss of life one month ago. Although united in spirit with fellow high school students throughout the country, TC students memorialized the lives lost by making a particular statement of their own. Beyond the politics of a divisive issue, our students were united in the mission of Tampa Catholic through an impressive expression of faith and family today. At 10 am this morning, marking the tragedy in Parkland, our students joined in school-wide prayer and silent memorial to each of the 17 victims at Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School.

Principal Robert Lees began the memorial with reflections "of what it means to be a Catholic school at a time of tragic loss, and how faith can be a source of comfort and hope for all who are touched by tragedy." Recalling by name and personal biography each of the 17 victims, Principal Lees led the entire student body in a moving tribute with the recitation of 17 Hail Marys in which all Crusaders across campus completed the prayer to Our Lady as a remembrance and intercession for the souls of the departed. True to our school motto, *Veritas et Caritas*, this prayerful memorial united our students in care and concern for the victims and their families.

Today's moving tribute culminated at 2:30 pm this afternoon with TC students posing for a photo with the memorial banner signed by hundreds of TC Crusaders that will be presented to the students at Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School as a lasting tribute from the extended TC family to the families in Parkland.

As the school day concluded, Principal Lees reflected, "Today was a day of which the extended TC family – parents, teachers, alumni, grandparents and friends – can be very proud. For the calling of our mission was on vivid display by our students - to live in *Veritas et Caritas*, to live in truth and charity – teaching each of us what it means to be a community of faith, excellence, and family. I couldn't be more proud of our students at this very moment. Today they embodied the ideals we as adults can only aspire to emulate."

Live Jesus In Our Hearts, Forever

BROTHER RICE

RESPECT

INTEGRITY

CHARACTER

EXCELLENCE

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Good Afternoon,

There has been much coverage in the news lately about a planned walkout of high school students that would occur today, Wednesday, March 14, at 10:00am, to protest the gun violence plaguing our schools. In solidarity with our consortium of Edmund Rice schools around the world, and in solidarity with other high schools in the Archdiocese of Detroit, we gathered in our gym this morning, at 10:00am, for a 17-minute prayer service. Our student leaders planned this service to allow our Brother Rice community the opportunity to pray for peace, wisdom, and healing as it relates to gun violence in United States High Schools, as well as, violence in all parts of the world.

Please offer up a prayer for peace in our schools, in our nation, and in our world.

ELLCCCLT

Mr. Okuniewski



Live, Jesus, in our hearts. Forever!



IonaPreparatory

Invest. Ignite. Inspire.

Iona Prep Students Stand in Solidarity with Parkland Victims - (Alex Malecki, Iona Prep)

More than 300 Upper School students chose to participate in a memorial service on Wellington T. Mara Field March 14 for the 17 victims of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. Similarly, at the Lower School, seventh grade pupils gathered outside around the Celtic cross to pray 17 Hail Marys, one for each Marjory Stoneman victim. These actions were part of a student-driven initiative to, rather than take a political stance or stage a protest, stand in solidarity with the victims of violence.

Participation in the memorial service was completely voluntary; staff and students who did not wish to participate remained in their classrooms. Members of the Upper School Leadership Committee specifically did not wish to have the service construed as a political action. Instead, their goal was to abide by the Essential Elements of an Edmund Rice Christian Brother Education and "stand in solidarity with those marginalized by poverty and injustice."

Prior to the service, the Leadership Committee met with members of the administration and circulated a survey to gauge the student body's comfort level with a memorial service. Iona Preparatory had been asked by alumni, Superintendent of Schools for the Archdiocese of New York and the province leader for the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers of North America to take part in the national tribute in some way. The students' spin was to hold a memorial service.

The morning of the service, an announcement and instructions were relayed to the student body via the [GaelForce LIVE](#) morning announcements broadcast. Numerous teachers and administrators accompanied the students outside to Mara Field, and a New Rochelle police officer was on hand to provide an added layer of safety. Students who chose to remain in class were shown a video on Catholic Social Teaching.

"If Iona Preparatory is truly 'Where Leaders Are Made,'" Iona Prep President Brother Thomas Leto wrote in a note to parents, "the future of this world depends on making them in the image of our one true teacher, Jesus Christ."

Please see below for a copy of the petitions read during the memorial service, or [read the president's message to parents](#). You may also click the link below to watch the video on Catholic Social Teaching shown to students that morning.

<http://www.ionaprep.org/apps/video/watch.jsp?...>

[Parkland Prayer Service Petitions.pdf](#) (108 KB)



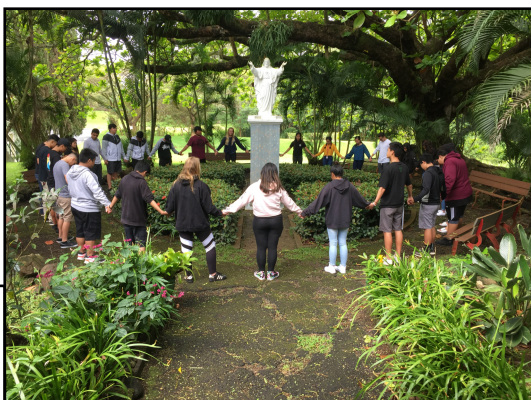


DAMIEN MEMORIAL SCHOOL

-Courtesy of Alan Eyerly- Damien Memorial

Students from Damien Memorial School in Honolulu, Hawaii, stood in solidarity with their counterparts across America by joining the #ENOUGH National School Walkout. This March 14th commemoration was held one month after 17 students and staff members were shot and killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

At Damien, an Edmund Rice Christian Brothers school, the walkout was organized by students from the Women in Leadership initiative, which pairs senior girls with adult female mentors who've distinguished themselves in a wide variety of fields. Providing support for the walkout were student government leaders, plus faculty and staff.



Right: Sophomore students off campus on retreat prayed for victims of gun violence on March 14th.
Below: Students participate in Damien Memorial's commemoration of the victims of the Parkland shooting.



Rather than focus on the politically divisive issue of calling for stricter gun control laws, Damien students highlighted the need to make all their classmates feel welcome. They emphasized that the school community is one big family – a close-knit *‘ohana* – and that no one should feel left out.

"I again find myself feeling extremely proud of my students," Damien Principal Br. Daniel Casey said following the walkout. "They took a stance against hate and for love. They came together as a community, as an *‘ohana*. They prayed. They raise me up!"



BROTHER RICE CHICAGO

Courtesy: Mike Dolan, Jim Antos, Brother Rice Chicago

In the school courtyard at Brother Rice Chicago we have a peace pole named for and dedicated to one of our students who died of cancer, just one day prior to the start of school in August of 2016. The Cameron Miller Fahey ('15) Peace Pole stands opposite a statue of Blessed Edmund in our courtyard named after Br. Tom Collins. On March 14th, our students came to the Peace Pole during their Theology classes, prayed for 17 minutes, lit a candle and then returned. All of our students did this throughout the day. Along with student affirmation and comment, the school thought this was the best way to reflect on the events that happened.



Students pray for peace around the Cameron Miller Fahey ('15) Peace Pole on the March 14th Day of Action.

Our prayer services were designed to include both a prayer for peace against gun violence from Pope Francis, as well as the prayer of St Francis. We finished with lightning candles around the Peace Pole. Any students who chose to walk out at 10:00 am went down to the peace pole and joined us for that period's prayer service.

Below, find the prayer used for the memorial service:

Adapted Prayer for Peace by Pope Francis

We have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by force of our arms. How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been shattered; how many hopes have been buried...

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again violence". Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace. Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of violence into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance, we may opt for reconciliation. Renew our hearts and minds, so the word which always brings us together will be 'brother', 'sister', and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace!



Students in Theology classes at Brother Rice gathered to pray for 17 minutes for the victims of the Parkland shooting.



Guadalupe Regional Middle School

Submitted by:

Kelly Griffith + Brother Arthur Williams



Upon hearing the news of the deaths at Marjory Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, I and several of my colleagues discussed how we and our students might respond as a school to this tragedy. Encouraged by Br. Kevin Griffith's letter and our administration we began to plan a "march" in protest to 'gun violence' and support for the victims and their families. Using this as our focal point, ideas began to take form. We were faced with two scheduling challenges: the first being spring break and the other our time after Easter with a trip for our eighth graders and Iowa testing. This limited our scheduling options. Time became precious with April 6th becoming set as our target date. This was also a day we had previously scheduled for our annual service day. In line with our focus, we prepared materials to honor and name victims of Columbine High School, Sandy Hook Elementary, and, of course, Marjory Douglas High School. We wished to also honor the many un-named children who have also been victims of gun violence in schools since Columbine.

We did not wish to merely give students the opportunity to 'walk out of class' in protest. Our plan instead involved several activities. Our house groups, Edmundians, Matel, and Champangnat, prepared poster and banners in the weeks leading up to our target date. Each student prepared a small poster with the name of a victim which they wore during our march. Reflections were prepared by our seventh grade students in their social studies class. They were asked to write evidence-based opinion pieces in response to the recent incidents of school violence across the country. Students also had time to reflect and learn about the purpose of the day in our house meetings and classes.

Our day began with students assembling in our cafeteria. 7th graders were selected to begin the day presenting their reflections before the student body. Following this, we formed into our house groups with their posters and banners. Each student wore the poster with the name of one of the victims throughout the walk. Faculty members and parents who accompanied us wore a poster with the symbol "Q" to represent un-named victims. Accompanied by a police escort, we began our walk through parts of downtown Brownsville. Our stops included the Federal Court House, Cameron County Court House and on to our cathedral, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. We stopped outside the cathedral to pray a decade of the Rosary and stopped in for a time of prayerful silent reflection. After about ten minutes we left with our police and returned back to the school for a short water break.

After a short rest we convened at our parish church, Our Lady of Guadalupe, for a short memorial service. Our house captains read a several prepared statements to focus us. They then began a meditative reading of the names of victims from Columbine, Sandy Hook, and Marjory Douglas. We also paused to remember the many other children victims of 'gun violence' whose lives were cut short too soon. After a period of silent prayer we returned to the school cafeteria where students had the opportunity write reflections about the morning using a series of writing prompts that were prepared by some members of the staff.

Our closing included a couple of large group photos and, of course, popsicles for their excellent effort. It was a full morning ending on a good note. Dismissal followed.

Peace to all,

The students, faculty and staff

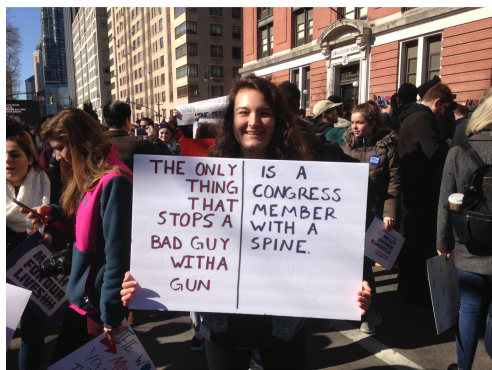
Guadalupe Regional Middle School- Brownsville, Texas





**Students and staff members from Iona College
joined with supporters at the March 24th
March for Our Lives in New York City:**

(photo credit: Carl Procario-Foley, Ph.D, Iona College)





Saint Laurence High School

Students at Saint Laurence High School in Burbank, Illinois supported the March 14th Day of Action with a March for Peace in memory of the tragedy in Parkland, Florida.



Submitted by:
Tom Gambardella,
Bishop Hendricken

Bishop Hendricken Students held a prayer service for the victims of the Parkland, Florida shooting before participating in their annual *Hunger Walk*, pictured right.



The third time is the charm! Mother Nature finally relented and Bishop Hendricken High School was finally able to hold its prayer service for the victims of gun violence across our nation. The prayer service was held just prior to the start of Hendricken's 44th annual *Hunger Walk*. The Walk is held to demonstrate to the community that Hendricken is an active advocate for the poor and marginalized of our society.

The prayer service focused on the victims of the recent Parkland School shooting. Students read the names of those killed in the attack and shared a brief history of each person. After the reading, a bell was tolled 17 times in honor of the deceased.

Bishop Hendricken will continue to work for and advocate for the end of senseless gun violence across our nation and our world through its student organization *SABER* (Student Advocates of Blessed Edmund Rice).



Submitted by: Br. Jim Hamilton, All Hallows

All Hallows had a school wide prayer service and prayer for peace in memory of the many victims on Wed., March 14. We followed up in religion classes with discussions about how to stop the violence, and what the Church teaches and how the Church has respond. We hope to build on these actions with other advocacy projects.



**BERGEN CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL**

Submitted by: John Tedeschi, Bergen Catholic

Bergen Catholic High School participated in events on March 14th. Students, in conjunction with the school administration, met with the administration in the lead up to the date. Ultimately, a school wide liturgy was held with the focus on violence and its impact on our society. Following the liturgy, and with the permission of the administration, some students participated in a voluntary walk out of the building in solidarity with other students doing the same around the country and even around the world. Our school Principal spoke with students who had walked out in the parking lot in support of their compassion and concern. Students then returned to class for the remainder of the day. My personal reflection is that the events of the did, in fact, spur students to think, talk, and pray about recent events in our country.

The ERCBNA Province extends its deep gratitude to our Edmund Rice Christian Brother Schools in Australia for their incredible display of solidarity and support for the initiatives surrounding the March 14th Day of Action.

St. Patrick's College, Australia



**PHOTOS FROM ACROSS
THE EDMUND RICE
GLOBAL NETWORK**



Seymour College, Australia



Aquinas College, Western Australia



Ignatius Park College, Australia



Christian Brothers College, Western Australia



Submitted by: Kevin Durazo, Catholic Memorial

The following was Catholic Memorial's planned response to the March 14th day of action across the U.S. Unfortunately, due to weather, school was cancelled on March 14th and 15th.

Pardon the interruption: We are Catholic Memorial, and as a Catholic, Christian Brothers school, our fundamental ideals and values call us to promote the dignity and sanctity of all life. All too often, though, our world can seem filled with thoughts, words, and actions that instead promote an environment of violence, fear, and death:

- Since the shooting at Sandy Hook, in Newtown, Connecticut in December 2012, there have been 290 shooting incidents at our nation's schools.
- Since 1990, there have been 22 shootings at schools that have involved the death of multiple people.
- And just last month, 17 members of Marjory Stoneham Douglas High School lost their lives in an act of senseless violence.

These incidents are examples of the ways in which our world has fallen short in promoting a culture of life and love.

Our Irish Edmund Rice heritage has always been to actively promote and work for a society and culture that stands unconditionally for human dignity and the sanctity of life. As Christians, this calling begins with Prayer. The purpose of Prayer is to open our hearts to the love of God, and in doing so, to be inspired to promote peace, love, and life, and to put our faith in Christ into action.

At this time, I invite you to join me in observing a moment of silence and personal prayer. I encourage you to pray that Jesus may fill your heart, and inspire you to work and advocate for a world that is more loving, just, and peaceful.

At this time, we invite all interested students to walk-out in promotion of peace and justice ...

PLANNED EVENTS/DAYS OF ACTION



National Walkout, April 20th, 2018 - Nationwide

LINKS-AUSTRALIA

Edmund Rice For Change- #NeverAgain Campaign

From March 14 - April 20 we will answer the call from Edmund Rice students in America, to stand in solidarity with students around the states calling on their government to create greater gun controls to keep schools safe. Find out more and register your school for an event below.

[EDMUND RICE FOR CHANGE #NEVERAGAIN CAMPAIGN](#)

