



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF SAN FRANCISCO

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΦΡΑΓΚΙΣΚΟΥ

May 21, 2018

✠Constantine and Helen, Equal-to-the-Apostles

Beloved in the Lord,

***“The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.”***  
***Psalm 29:11***

I just returned from spending the weekend in Brookline, Massachusetts for the 76<sup>th</sup> Commencement at Hellenic College Holy Cross School of Theology. Seeing the eager faces of our graduates and their families brought me great joy. At the same time, my heart was deeply troubled by the senseless act of violence that occurred recently in Santa Fe, Texas. I could not help but think of the parents who will never have the opportunity to see their children graduate. A community is torn apart. Families are inconsolable. Students and teachers are traumatized.

Education is a treasured gift we can give our children. They have the opportunity to expand their horizons, learn new skills, and chart a course for their promising futures. This week the hope for tomorrow was tragically taken away when another school shooting took the lives of 10 people at Santa Fe High School in Texas. Among them were eight students and two teachers. Thirteen more have sustained injuries.

Every day parents send their children off to school, and every day they expect them to come home. Children go to school to learn, and instead they are confronted with these acts of violence. Stories of students huddling in closets, texting and calling their parents to tell them “I love you” just in case they do not make it out alive should not be one of the lasting memories from high school.

Sadly, our children are having to grow up too fast. Through the influence of the internet and social media, compounded by violence throughout the world, they are seeing and experiencing more than they should at their age, and being robbed of their childhood.

The young man who shot his classmates has been identified as Greek Orthodox. While we are blessed to have the true faith, we do not have all the answers when it comes to helping children who are at the brink of despair. What we can do is to have faith, to pray together as a family, to talk openly and honestly, listening to your children and showing them love, patience and compassion.

Let us not dwell only on this tragedy. Rather, we must use this as an opportunity to teach our children about safety, to let them know that someone cares and will listen to them and provide support so they can turn to us, and especially to Christ, for guidance and love.

Please keep the families of those whose lives were tragically lost in your prayers that they will be comforted by God’s grace and peace. We must also remember the students who witnessed this horrific violence, that their hearts may be healed as they continue to raise their voices imploring for safety in our schools.

Beseeking the Lord’s watchful protection over you and your loved ones, and praying for peace, I remain,

With Love in Christ,

  
✠Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco