

**Holy Name Parish  
1689 Centre Street  
West Roxbury, MA 02132  
(617) 325-4865**

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**Collaborative Parishes of Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Theresa of Avila  
4750 Washington Street  
West Roxbury, MA 02132  
(617) 325-1300**

April 7, 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians of the Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Grade Confirmation Students:

We write today to follow up on the previous communication that you received informing you of the premature ending of our Confirmation Retreat at Saint John Chrysostom Parish.

The retreat was interrupted about two-thirds of the way through the program at the conclusion of the meal break at approximately 3:30 PM when a student informed one of our adult faith formation leaders that the student had found a handwritten note on one of the tables where the group had been eating their meal. The note contained an explicit threat of violence directed towards the entire group. The adult faith formation leader brought the note directly to Father John Connolly, Pastor of Saint John Chrysostom Parish, who immediately convened an urgent meeting of the adult staff and volunteer leaders to inform them of the developing situation and issue instructions about safely evacuating the students in accordance with the parish's safety and security plans and protocol. The Boston Police Department was informed concurrently by Father Connolly via a 911 call. The adult leaders safely and efficiently managed the evacuation of all the students into the parking lot as the first of the responding officers were pulling up within just a few minutes of the emergency call's being placed.

After consulting with the Boston Police Sergeant who had command and control of the scene and after the officers, including a ballistics-sniffing canine, had thoroughly searched and swept the interior and exterior portions of the property, the students were informed that the afternoon's remaining events had been cancelled and were instructed to call their parents if they were supposed to be picked up or to head home if the plan was for them to walk. We must tell you how respectful, courteous and cooperative the students were as a group as they followed the instructions of their equally impressive adult leaders who so clearly prioritized and provided the necessary safety and security measures in response to this incident.

As parents and guardians of these students we recognize the priority you place on their safety and security. We also realize that the unexpected and troubling events of yesterday have had an immediate, and in some cases, an enduring, traumatic impact on your children and your families. We want to reassure you that as was demonstrated in the response to yesterday's troubling events that we as Pastors of your Parishes both understand and share that priority. We encourage you, particularly if you have not yet had an opportunity to do so, to sit down with your child or children and give them the chance to share their reactions, questions, concerns and anxieties about yesterday's events. If you deem it necessary, members of our parishes' staffs are available to

assist you in such a conversation or make referrals to experienced counselors beyond our parish staff members who would be able to provide you with additional coping and therapeutic resources your child/children and family may need or desire. If any of your children share with you any helpful information about anything they heard, saw or otherwise came to know about yesterday's events, we encourage you to reach out personally and confidentially to one of us. Father George Evans may be reached via e-mail at: [george.evans@holynameparish.com](mailto:george.evans@holynameparish.com) or on his cell phone at: (617) 791-1440. Father John Connolly may be reached via e-mail at: [fr.johncwr@gmail.com](mailto:fr.johncwr@gmail.com) or on his cell phone at: (617) 699-5580. We will be grateful for any information you may be able to discover and willing to share.

You should also be aware that this matter remains as an open and ongoing investigation of the Boston Police Department and is now in the competent and capable hands of investigating detectives of Boston Police Department District E-5 here in West Roxbury. You may contact them via telephone at: (617) 343-4560. We want to once again commend and thank the responding officers of District E-5 for their swift and effective response to the situation that developed yesterday.

We are also grateful for the support that we have received and are continuing to receive from the Archdiocese of Boston, particularly from the Offices of Archbishop Henning and Bishop Mark O'Connell as well as the Offices for Risk Management and Communications and Public Affairs.

Yesterday's sad events remind us all of our need for God's Grace and Mercy in our lives. We are eternally grateful above all to Almighty God that we all came through yesterday safely. We look forward to celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation with you, your child/children and your families next month. May the remaining days of this Lenten Season of Grace and the approaching days of the celebration of Our Lord's Easter Resurrection and victory over sin and death be a source of consolation, hope and peace for us all.

With gratitude for your attention to this letter and asking God to bless you and all whom you hold dear, we are

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Connolly, Jr." in a cursive script.

Reverend George P. Evans  
Pastor

Reverend John J. Connolly, Jr.  
Pastor