

# Disaster and Emergency Preparedness

To: The Bellarmine University Community

From: Dr. Joseph J. McGowan, President

Re: Disaster and Emergency Preparedness

Date: April 18, 2007

The unprecedented and heretofore unimaginable violence and tragedy at Virginia Tech two mornings ago is causing Bellarmine University, and every other responsible institution, to review yet again its emergency response plans.

Bellarmino's existing Disaster Preparedness Manual is [available to all students, faculty and staff on the intranet and student portal]. Therefore, all members of the campus community should now have immediate access to it.

I want to stress again, however, that this plan will now be reviewed, improved and reposted very soon. Everyone will be notified as soon as that happens. The horrifying events at Virginia Tech show that our current plan, while thorough and professionally done, reflects too benign a sense of the possible, and it will be revised accordingly.

This review will include the key issues of prevention, response and communications in the event of any emergency on our campus. We are planning already to improve our ability to communicate with you wherever you are. This might involve improvements to public address systems, telephone systems, and also text messaging to cell phones.

We are a university dedicated to academic inquiry and mastery. We are also a campus and a community inspired by the spirit of Thomas Merton, whose long and vital relationship with this place has entrusted us with a beautiful tradition – a tradition that involves a keen sensitivity to the interconnectedness of all life, and to humanity, and to human solidarity. All of us at Bellarmine explore an inner cosmos of ultimate questions, and an external world of great problems and complexities.

And so without naiveté , and without cynicism, but with the pursuit and love of truth and understanding, we strive for excellence in all that we do. This is how we will respond on every level to the horrible tragedy in Virginia.

Meanwhile, the Bellarmine University community will pray for the students and faculty killed and injured at Virginia Tech and for their families, and also we will pray that never again will any college or university community experience such wasteful, destructive, and horrific evil.