



## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Pastors of the Diocese of Joliet  
FROM: Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon, Bishop of Joliet  
DATE: May 19, 2014  
RE: CONCEALED CARRY PROHIBITION

As you are likely aware, the State of Illinois has enacted a law permitting people to carry concealed gun, except into certain specified locations and private property where expressly prohibited by the owner.

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Joliet has already provided guidance as to how our school buildings are to be posted with the required decals.

The question of other diocesan property has been discussed by the Presbyteral Council. Although the council advised against a universal policy prohibiting concealed guns, the members did advise me to issue a memorandum outlining some principles that should guide pastors in dealing with the issue.

1. The Church recognizes the natural right every person has to defend his life and those for whom he is responsible, and in the United States the Church acknowledges the freedom accorded to citizens by the Second Amendment of the Constitution “to bear arms”. Nevertheless, we also profess to be disciples of the Prince of Peace whose one commandment for his followers is “to love one another as I have loved you.” Firearms in our churches, halls, offices, cemeteries or other facilities seem contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.
2. It is my strong request that concealed guns be prohibited from all properties owned under the Diocese of Joliet Trust (which includes virtually all of our parish properties). One exception might be residential rental property. The final decision on the matter rests with the pastor, after he consults with the parish pastoral council. Where a school is directly attached to another facility (e.g., church, gym, hall), however, that facility must be a prohibited facility.
3. Local law enforcement officials should be contacted for advice on how to post a prohibited facility.
4. No parish or other diocesan institution is required or expected to take any particular action to enforce a voluntary prohibition. If concerns about enforcement arise, local police should be contacted. Be advised that certain persons are exempt by law from prohibitions imposed by private property owners, and leaving a gun securely in one’s vehicle is not considered a violation of a prohibition.

More information on the concealed carry law can be found at the Illinois State Police website. Questions concerning this memorandum may be directed to Mr. Alex Rechenmacher ([arechenmacher@dioceseofjoliet.org](mailto:arechenmacher@dioceseofjoliet.org)) in my office.