

# An Important Message from St. Elizabeth Youth Ministry

As you may be aware, Netflix released season two of the popular series *13 Reasons Why*, based on the 2007 best-selling novel of the same name, written by Jay Asher. This is a graphic, intense series which portrays bullying, sexual assault, substance abuse, and suicide in teens. This series, which is rated for mature audiences, is focused on a fictional 17-year-old girl who takes her own life and leaves behind 13 audio recordings for people whose actions she feels contributed to her decision to commit suicide. As such, it is not recommended that vulnerable youth, especially those who have any degree of suicidal thoughts or ideation, watch this series.

Many of our young people have viewed this series. We agree that these are important issues which need to be discussed, but we are concerned about the confusing messages which may be conveyed if the series is viewed without any discussion or reflection on the topics presented. We recommend that you do not let your child watch this series alone and without discussion.

Christ's healing love is present in all things, including mental illness and suicide. The Church can provide hope and a healing presence for people with mental illness. It is crucial that the youth know that they are loved and not alone.

The following links will provide some resources that will help you start a discussion with your child about the series: A toolkit developed by an international coalition of leading experts in mental health suicide prevention, and education: <https://www.13reasonswhytoolkit.org/>

Before You Watch 13 Reasons Why

<http://lifeteen.com/blog/watch-13-reasons/>

<http://lifeteen.com/blog/13-reasons-just-symptom/>

Resources from Netflix

<https://13reasonswhy.info/>

At any time, if you feel that your young person is struggling with a personal crisis, please reach out for assistance and referrals to help our young people navigate these confusing times. In addition, the Long Island Crisis Center provides 24-hour services by trained mental health professionals and can be reached at 516-679-1111 or at <http://longislandcrisiscenter.org>

It is our hope that these resources can be used to support effective dialogue and engagement among our young people. In the words of Saint Pope John Paul II, "it is everyone's duty to make an active response; our actions must show that mental illness does not create insurmountable distances, nor prevent relations of true Christian charity."

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