



## Nothing's Secret On Social Media

by *Father Steven E. Boes*

(NAPSA)—Whatever your child puts on his or her Facebook account, Twitter or any other social media profile is public and searchable. Anything on your child's social media accounts is open to possible public scrutiny—and it's important that you know what your child is posting out there.



**Father Boes**

If kids are posting embarrassing pictures from the weekend or making crude comments about a friend, those pictures and comments are neither secret nor sacred.

Making decisions about what information can be shared and what should stay secret is a skill that takes time to develop. Unfortunately, many youths have not mastered this skill when it comes to using social networks. As a parent, it's up to you to help them

recognize what's appropriate and what's inappropriate, and then monitor their messages.

Sit down with your kids and ask them what sort of things they talk about with their friends. Then ask if they would want everyone they know to overhear what they say. Explain to them that when they post something on a social network, they are making it available to anybody anywhere who has an account on that network. Most importantly, teach them that some information is worth keeping private.

When used properly, social networks can be a fun, interesting way of communicating. It can also be a dark, dangerous place where people, including your kids, can get hurt. Take the time to do what it takes to protect and educate your kids.

• *Father Boes is president and national executive director of Boys Town, which has been saving children and healing families for more than 90 years.*