



Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina

August 12, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As followers of Jesus, we boldly proclaim that he is the perfect manifestation and fulfillment of the promises echoed in the 85th Psalm:

Mercy and truth have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other

By word and action, Jesus taught his disciples that hatred, bigotry, racism and violence is anathema to the Kingdom of God. Our Lord modeled peace and unity by naming the evil voices of discord, division and oppression. Indeed, there is no other way to be faithful servants of God.

Like many of you, I've been watching with uneasiness as extremist groups have gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia. Today, we saw these groups violently clash with counter-protestors, and the governor of Virginia has declared a state of emergency.

I want to be clear that as Jesus' disciples, we are commanded to not only pray for peace but to also be the embodiment of God's love and justice. As Christians, we must speak out against both the bigotry and hatred espoused by these extremists as well as the violence that has occurred because of their actions.

I invite all Episcopalians of the Diocese of Western North Carolina to join me in prayer for those who were injured or died in the violent outbreaks in Charlottesville. Pray for the safety of all who live in that community and pray for those charged with keeping the peace. Tomorrow, as you gather in your churches, I encourage you to remember our Baptismal Covenant -- may we persevere in resisting evil, hatred, violence and prejudice in any form, and may we respect the dignity of every human being, striving for peace and justice in all things.

Finally, I also ask everyone to join me in taking measurable steps to build bridges in our communities and be agents of our Lord's mercy, grace, truth and love. There is great strength in the unity of our faith. Together, we will stand as one body holding fast to the teachings of Christ.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol and followed by the name 'José A. McLoughlin' in a cursive script.

The Rt. Rev. José A. McLoughlin
VII Bishop of Western North Carolina

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