

A follow-up letter on Charlottesville

August 23, 2017

By The Rt. Rev. José A. McLoughlin



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last week I wrote a [letter](#) in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Charlottesville.

I want to be clear that as Christians, we must meet everyone with the love of Christ in our hearts -- no matter their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or country of origin. We are all God's children. Likewise, the ideologies espoused by any hate group, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, and white supremacists, are the antithesis of the teachings of Jesus.

But I want to do more than just make pronouncements. In the past, I've watched many times as our leaders spoke out against overt and systemic racism, bigotry and oppression. Too often, their good words were not followed by concrete actions. Now that I am in a position to make these statements myself, I hold myself accountable to initiate a collaborative process for moving forward.

First, I want you to know that I am meeting with the Diocesan Commission to Dismantle Racism this week. This commission exists in our diocese to equip all of us to name, confess, resist and confront the sin of racism through prayer, education, advocacy and action. I want to use their expertise to begin a dialogue in our diocese about how we can take the next steps; we must move beyond verbal support to wholehearted, concrete practices that cultivate systemic change. I will communicate the results of our conversation in the coming weeks

Second, I ask that all congregations begin having intentional conversations about how they can address hate and bigotry in their communities. I believe this is an important time to come together, to talk, to pray, and to look deep in our hearts for solutions. As I visit your parishes, I want to hear about these conversations.

Last, I invite every church to include in your worship the Collect for the Human Family during the next four Sundays. It is my hope that this will help give us guidance as we move forward:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which

infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us;
unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and
confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in
your good time, all nations and races may serve you in
harmony around your heavenly throne;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As bishop, it is my mission to find ways for us to collaborate on programs, education and ministries so that we can continue to lead the charge towards unity and reconciliation in Western North Carolina. Together, we must walk with Jesus and participate in God's own mission to redeem the world.

In Christ,

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

A statement from the Bishop in solidarity with Charlottesville

August 12, 2017

By The Rt. Rev. José A. McLoughlin

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,

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