

Sisters and Brothers,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I have recently completed the first 100 days and I wanted to share these first days with you.

It goes without saying that I miss Suzanne and Jude terribly. As you may know, they are in Albuquerque while Jude is completing his senior year of high school. The difficulty is in not being present with them, not hearing their voices, and not living out the rhythm of my family. However, my diocesan family has embraced us. You have provided a loving support that allows me to go forth in our ministry. Thank you.

During this time, I have found your love to be indescribable. Moreover, your faith is transformative, and your desire to change the world in His name is inspiring. Together we will build the Kingdom of God. A dying church does not correlate with my belief in a resurrected Jesus Christ.

The best part of these first days is to simply be present with you. We will laugh and cry, rejoice and at times mourn. We will talk and listen. We will pray and then praise Jesus Christ. In short, we will live into our calling as a community in Jesus Christ.

## **TO SERVE YOU**

The clergy and laity are doing the front line work in the vineyard of the Lord. Our ministry as the Diocesan Office is a servant ministry; thus *we will serve you*. It was Jesus who said that if we would be great in the Kingdom of God, we must become servants of all. It is a great honor, and responsibility to be in the ministry we find ourselves. It is a ministry in which we must follow Jesus, our Great Shepherd, and become servants. We have developed a written purpose for our ministry.

You will find this purpose on the diocesan web site, and staff meeting agendas: **“To Proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and build the Kingdom of God by SERVING the clergy and laity of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania.”** We will walk into the future with this understanding. Thus, we will work to remove any obstacles and strive to provide the resources so you can proclaim the Good News.

## **PILGRIMAGES**

The pilgrimages have been transformative. I believe a Shepherd should smell like the sheep. The purpose of the pilgrimages has been to listen, learn and then to use this listening and learning for your service.

Through the pilgrimage, we have shared our collective stories. I am learning our history and our strengths and weaknesses. The conversations and sharing have been inspiring; together we are imagining the possibilities in this Diocese. Moreover, the suggestions for improvement and priorities for growth were enlightening. Each week, as a staff, we review these conversations. All of the internal work for improvement in the office of the Diocese is in response to your suggestions, encouragement, and input.

We need your continued input as to how we can better serve you. Our relationship is an open ongoing conversation. The diocesan staff wants to hear from you about how to best use our skills and resources in a faithful way that supports your ministry.

## **COMMUNITY (COMMON UNITY IN JESUS CHRIST) and COMMUNICATION**

Community is important; we need one another. Together as a staff and diocese, we will endeavor to build a place of trust, transparency, safe conversations, and kindness. We are more than 132 disparate parishes, we are truly the body of Christ: *"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."* 1 Corinthians 12

Our staff now has daily prayer and the Holy Eucharist at the beginning of every day. God has called us to this work, at this time, in this place. The Body of Christ is more than a connection to you; it's a connection to one another. We share with one another, assist one another and rejoice with one another.

Christ is present in community, this is the reason for the emphasis on communication. We have strived to improve all aspects of communication. We are using social media, weekly newsletters, our diocesan website and electronic mailings. We are in the forefront of communication in the church with the development of a Resource Guide and Diocesan App. Over the next few years, we will be intentional in highlighting our churches and ministries. We will celebrate our ministries and empower one another in our collective mission.

As Bishop, I will strive to be present among you. Being present means listening, discerning, moving authentically and deliberately. In short, walking this journey with you. When I first came to the Diocese of Pennsylvania as a candidate for Bishop, members of the diocese expressed a desire to have a deeper connection with their bishop; please know I always keep that in mind. I am committed to having a personal

relationship with each of you as we come to know one another. I have been guided and inspired by the things you share with me.

## 100 DAYS

In the first 100 days, these are the things we, the staff of the Offices of the Diocese of Pennsylvania and I, have accomplished on your behalf. All things are possible through Jesus Christ.

- **Pilgrimage.** Over the first 7 months I will have visited all of our congregations.
- **Communication by the Bishop.** Creation of Bishop's Blog - A Shepherd in the Field. This is community building, accountability and sharing of our history.
- **Diocesan Resource Guide.** This guide is based largely on your requests and contributions. It is a directory of information about the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, and how we can best serve you. You will find information, links, and documents that span a variety of topics from clergy compensation and benefits to leadership resources, volunteer opportunities and help from social services. It is a digital document that will continue to grow and change as we learn of your needs.
- **Diocesan Directory App (DIOPACONnect).** The DIOPA Mobile Directory is one of a series of apps that our team is developing. This app has been designed to help members of our diocese have direct access to one another no matter where we are. It also promotes connectivity by adding photos, shared experiences and our Twitter feed to the primary data contained in our diocesan directory. You can use it to find any of our churches, (including the Episcopal Church closest to you), and even have directions loaded directly to your phone's navigation.
- **Episcopal Presence.** It was disheartening for me to learn that some of our congregations have not had a visit from the Diocesan Bishop in over six years. I am dedicated to assuring I am available for confirmations, receptions, reaffirmations, and baptisms. I have begun the work of making special trips to churches for a special visitation on weekday or Sunday evenings to be present for these important sacraments. This special visitation will not affect how long it will be until I can visit you on a Sunday morning. I will strive to be present at the major life events in parishes (Institutions, Dedications, etc.) and make every attempt to be present at the celebrations of life and transitions of our clergy.
- **Deacons.** A growing emphasis on the fullness of the Diaconate. I meet with the Deacons quarterly, and a deacon will accompany me on all Sunday Visitations.
- **Priests.** I hold sacred the relationship between the Bishop and the Priest. I want to ensure that our Priests have the resources necessary to build the Kingdom. We have been working to discern and develop the economic, spiritual, personal

resources for our clergy. We need healthy clergy to develop healthy congregations.

- **Cathedral.** Working closely with the Dean and the Cathedral Community on variety of ministries.
- **Video Messages.** Increased use for Pastoral Messages, events, and diocesan life.
- **Social Media Presence.** Facebook Page, Instagram Page, Twitter Account, YouTube Page, Vimeo Page, daily Constant Contact E-mails.
- **Revision of Diocesan Website.** We are committed to having a beautiful, functional, and intuitive website.
- **Weekly Communication Schedule.** We are communicating often, through various channels, to make sure that you know all that is happening in the Diocese. Please, be sure to sign up with all the different communication outlets. We want to share with you and the wider church our vibrant life together in Christ.
- **Development of diocesan magazine.** The development of a written magazine is in response to those who do not have access to a computer and would like to be engaged in diocesan life. We will start with a few printed copies for those that request the information and move forward based on the response.
- **Internal Calendar.** For use by staff for meetings and follow up.
- **External Calendars for Staff.** Visitation and staff schedules are all being made available.
- **External Calendar for Deaneries.** Where all parish events are on a centralized calendar. The Deans and Parish Administrators now have the ability to update and share.
- **Written Transition Process Document.** With the help and input from various groups within the Diocese and our Transition ministry, we have collaborated to produce a written Transition Process document. It outlines, in detail, all the steps and a timeline for churches that are in transition. From the moment a church begins a transition to the moment a new priest begins the ministry, details of the process are now available and can be tracked.
- **Staff Retreat.** The staff of the Offices of the Diocese held a retreat in September. During that retreat, I shared with them my vision for servant ministry in the Diocese. We called upon one another to move forward as a team centered around servanthood and consistency.
- **Relational Covenant.** We have published our relational covenant as to how we would engage with one another. In it, we have promised to serve the Diocese by honoring the work we do together. We are committed to clear communication, honesty, confidentiality, and avoiding triangulation. We strive to operate "above reproach" in all of our work together, just as Scripture advises. This covenant is available for download and use.

- **Standing Committee Retreat and Relational Covenant.** A transformative retreat with Standing Committee was held in August. We pledged to walk and live together as a Christian community. The retreat and subsequent follow-up work is a rebirth in the life of the relationship between Standing Committee and the Bishop. Standing Committee acts not only as a deliberative body but as the Council of Advice to the Bishop. I intend to walk closely, listen and discern with Standing Committee as we continue to build the Kingdom of God. Moreover, we will work together to set forth important guideposts for the future.
- **Diocesan Council.** I am working and will continue to work to build up the vital ministry of this body. It represents the entirety of the laity and clergy. We will envision together how to serve you best. Eucharist before our meetings is now part of our agenda.
- **Deaneries and Deans.** I believe in the work of the Deaneries. They inspire a spirit of growth, encouragement, and work. I trust the Deans. They are our voice in the community and “launching pads” for the spread of the Gospel. When I meet with the Deans, we now have Eucharist to begin our meetings, and we end the meetings with a meal.
- **Responsiveness to your needs.** We have discussed that if you call the Offices of the Diocese, it is important to you, your congregation and ministry. The staff is faithful and devoted to the call of Jesus Christ. We will work to meet this call and return emails that you send and phone calls that you make within 24 hours of receiving them.
- **Servant Language.** As a reminder to each of us, we have even changed the way we answer the phones and talk about ourselves. As servants, our staff is not “the Diocese.” All of our congregations, clergy, and laity are “the Diocese.” We are the offices of the Diocese. So, we refer to ourselves that way, and when you call you will hear, “The Offices of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, how may we serve you?” I want you to know that it is something that I have embodied since you elected me to be your Bishop.
- **Emphasis on Service as a Community.** Operating with openness, vulnerability and transparency. To that end there has been and will be ongoing work internally with our offices to establish a process for various administrative functions and operations including the cross-training of staff. An excellent example of this work was having the youth program staff move back into the diocesan office. It is truly wonderful, too, that we have all of our staff back in the same space.
- **Revising job descriptions.** We have begun, and we will continue the work of reorganizing staff, changing job descriptions and titles, and evaluating the organizational structure. What emerges will be an office that is agile and skilled in responding to the variety of needs within the Diocese.

- **Congregational Life and Re-Development Team.** We have begun the essential work of putting together a congregational life and re-development team. We will strive to develop, train and activate ministries that will help clear the field of obstacles so that you can focus on the important work of building the Kingdom. We will examine how the diocesan offices can assist you through management support, transition relief, and transformative “reimagining” parish retreats. Moreover, the staff will journey with you during times of difficulty. There will be one Congregational Life and Re-Development Team supporting you.
- **Ordained Ministry.** In consultation with Standing Committee and the Commission on Ministry, I have suspended our ordained ministry discernment process for one year so that we might review and refine the process. By this action, and the subsequent committee work, we will gain clarity and insight regarding candidates for ordained leadership who are best suited to respond to God's mission for the church in the next two decades and beyond.
- **Youth Ministry and Servant Year.** We placed Servant Year on hiatus to make changes and improve outreach. We are in the process of reimagining the program where participants can serve congregations in meaningful and Christian ways.

I have listed some of our work over these past 100 days. I will make mistakes, but I will strive to learn and to serve you. I will make a great effort to model to our clergy and diocese a whole pattern of work, prayer, and rest. For everything is a season; the pilgrimage and this foundational work has been necessary. We are tilling the soil and now we will begin planting, watering, and nurturing the seeds. We will be in a new season of intentionality after this time of transitional work. Saying that, we put our trust in Jesus Christ.

## DESTINATIONS

Often people ask what my goals and vision are for next year. Goals and visions are solely informed by our collective vision. As I have said, my episcopacy does not exist without you. I like to use the imagery of a pilgrimage, and we are on this pilgrimage together. On a pilgrimage, one walks to the destination and then stops to rest. The communal destinations we will continue toward are:

1. **Jesus Christ.** This call may sound simple but we must not be afraid to proclaim and preach the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We have to offer the world something different. We are not just building community for the sake of belonging, for the sake of social justice, for the sake of beauty, for the sake of art and music, or even for the sake of spirituality. All of those communities already

exist in the world. If we are not offering anything different in our churches than what is readily available, how can we expect to people to come? What do we have that no soccer team, community project, or crowdfunding campaign has? Jesus. He is our message, our hope, our purpose, and our only reason for existing. If we don't offer Jesus to the world, then why exist?

- Live into our calling. What is God calling each one of us to do in our lives, churches and community? What is God calling us to do as a diocese?
- Empower the Laity through scripture and theological education and formation.
- Read Scripture daily.
- Discern how we go deeper with Jesus Christ both spiritually and individually.

## **2. Servant Ministry**

- Discern how we build up our youth ministries.
- Care, resource and wellness offerings for Priests and Deacons
- Theological and educational initiatives for the laity.
- Involvement of our matriarchs and patriarchs in Diocesan life.
- Efficiency: Create logical, open and transparent diocesan processes. We review documents and place all relevant information on the web.
- Continue to answer calls, return emails promptly and efficiently.
- Accessible communication is one of the continued destinations.
- Build up our smaller and medium-size congregations.
- Raise up Priests and Deacons to serve the unique needs of our congregations. This includes initiatives on innovation, management re-envision, centralized services and creativity.

## **3. Listen, Learn, and earn your Trust.**

- As your Bishop, to find ways to further engage our churches to assist in growth and ministry.
- To walk with intentionality, faithfulness, trust and openness (and more importantly - listening) in the development of our minority congregations.
- Create spaces for transparent, safe conversations, characterized by forgiveness and kindness.
- We will serve you in ways that are both strategic and organic and will structure our efforts so that all our work is geared toward building our

parishes and our community of faith. Work to remove obstacles and provide resources.

- Review our properties and ask: Are they being used to their fullest? How can we care for our sacred places?

4. **As a Diocese, a willingness to be a voice in the community.** To actively address the suffering in our community. Engage and empower the work occurring in our churches in the areas of: violence, poverty, hunger, addiction, teen pregnancy, human trafficking, racism, sexism, marginalization, and abuse. We will discern how we as a Body of Christ can institute meaningful and transformative change in the name of Jesus.

5. **Be a Shepherd. Envision our journey beyond 100 days.** As Bishop I will attempt to:

- Continue work to earn your trust.
- Model to clergy and the Diocese a healthy pattern of work, family, prayer.
- Be sacredly present for you.
- Continually learn. Expand my capacity for learning.
- Live into this calling as your Bishop. Discern when to have the “micro” view and the “macro” view. When it is time to sprint, and when it is time to walk. When to lead from the front and when to lead from behind.
- Ask that you pray for me, and I will continue to pray for you.
- Rely constantly on Jesus Christ.

There is more to share than I can put in this letter, but I wanted you to get a sense of how things are taking shape. I am truly grateful for our dedicated and caring Diocesan staff. They have made this a better place and have helped me grow during this time. They continue to amaze me with their love of this place.

I also want to thank you for your faithfulness and your Kingdom Building vision. I want to thank you for sharing your gifts - personally and financially. Those gifts allow our work as a church to grow and spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am blessed to serve as the Bishop of the Diocese Of Pennsylvania. I hope and pray to live into the calling as your Bishop. Be hopeful, be courageous and let's go forth with a knowing that Jesus Christ is with us until the end of time. May God bless you and those you love this day and always.

Your brother in Jesus Christ,



The Rt. Rev. Daniel G. P. Gutierrez  
XVI Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania