



The
Episcopal Diocese
of New York

January 9, 2021

Brothers and Sisters,

We write to you two days after we all witnessed an organized insurrection against the lawful government of the United States of America. As all the world has seen and knows, the Capitol building was breached, vandalized, its offices ransacked, trophies taken, our elected senators and representatives threatened, and both a police officer and one of the insurrectionists killed. The marauders met little resistance, and there were few arrests, as we watched a failure of law enforcement at every level. The work of government, and the certification of our presidential election, were suspended for several hours, and almost all of the criminal element who carried out this invasion were allowed to walk away from it without consequence. The treasonous flag of the Confederacy - that banner of American shame - was paraded through the halls of our government. In places, the American flag was removed and replaced with banners bearing the name of Donald Trump, at whose behest and in whose name this insurrection was waged. This outrage was played out before the eyes of the world, to the horror of our friends and the delight and derision of our enemies.

Worse than the actions of the insurrection itself was the fact that it was incited by the President of the United States. This was something which in our whole history until this week was unthinkable, shocking, and it can never be forgotten. History will certainly remember this as the final, disgraceful legacy of the Trump presidency, eclipsing everything else he has done. Even in the hour of the insurrection itself, he called these thugs “patriots” and “special people.” Now words like “coup” and “treason” are being used about our president by leaders of both parties, and by scores of people who have given their lives to public service. Those words have also been used across our church and by our presiding bishop. Calls are coming from across government and the nation to remove the president from office before the end of his term. Today, Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has joined other denominational heads in the National Council of Churches calling for exactly that. These are unprecedented times.

President-Elect Biden and Vice President-Elect Harris will come into office with the herculean task of uniting a fractured and violent nation, and restoring the honor of the presidency. Every person of good will must rise to support them and help in that effort. Those who carried out this act of shame have promised more, and more violent, actions to come. This country is not out of danger, and the future of our republic and common life are profoundly uncertain. Perhaps our biggest fear is that some essential thread which has bound us together in the past has now been cut, and that we may now devolve into chaos.

As Christians, we are people for whom reconciliation is not simply another virtue, but is the foundation of our life and who we are. “I came,” Jesus said, “that all may be one, as the Father and I are one.” We must have a part in this work of unification and reconciliation, in our nation, indeed, but it begins in our own communities and parishes. But reconciliation is deeper and richer than simply “making up” or agreeing to disagree. It also requires of us the amendment of our own lives,

the striving for justice, the naming of evil in our midst, the forgiveness of sin, true humility, and the tireless effort of calling our friends and adversaries into the work of peace. Coming to terms with this vast broken segment of our population is part of the work of Beloved Community, to which we have bound ourselves and given ourselves as a people and a church. That hard work has already been laid before us, and we have made promises to that work of peace, as recently as our Convention in November. It will be harder now, but it remains central to our call to the gospel life.

We your bishops call on all in our diocese, and every parish, to join in prayer over these days, but particularly as we come together tomorrow, on Sunday, in common prayer. Our presiding bishop has gathered the prayers below from the Book of Common Prayer as most appropriate to the circumstances, and we commend them to you.

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name "Andy" in a cursive script.

+Andy

The Right Reverend Andrew ML Dietsche
Bishop of New York

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name "Allen" in a cursive script.

+Allen

The Right Reverend Allen K Shin
Bishop Suffragan of New York

+Mary

The Right Reverend Mary D Glasspool
Bishop Assistant of New York

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name "Mary" in a cursive script.

+Mary

The Right Reverend Mary D Glasspool
Bishop Assistant of New York

THE PRAYERS:

Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;
Govern and uphold us now and always.

Day by day we bless you;
We praise your name forever.

Lord, keep us from sin today;
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.

Lord, show us your love and mercy;
For we put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope;
And we shall never hope in vain.

- *Morning Prayer II, Book of Common Prayer, p. 98*

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered together under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one God and Creator of us all; to whom be dominion and glory, now and forever.

- *For Peace, Book of Common Prayer, p. 815*

Oh God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your son. Look now with compassion on the entire human family; and particularly this part of the family, in the United States, and those in our nation's capital; 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.

- *For the Human Family, Book of Common Prayer, p. 815*

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.