



The Episcopal Diocese
of Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Daniel G.P. Gutiérrez

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave. (Rev 1:17-18)

My Siblings in Christ,

Over the last few weeks, we have been left heartbroken by what is occurring in Minneapolis, our country, and the continued pain suffered by God’s children. I plan to write, expand, and call us to act further in my Lenten message.

Prior to yesterday's news, I scheduled a time to meet with our Deacons to prepare for continuing to live into our calling to be the Church of the Poor. I am also scheduling a time with the Deans and the clergy in the next few days.

If we are called the Body of Christ, called the Church, then we must reawaken in heart, lives, and spirit what it means to become human. We must be the Church of the Poor. A Church of the poor, compassionate, merciful, and loving.

We must now, more than ever, live into a theology of Proximity and Presence. A church willing to go to the foot of the cross. Being the church of the poor means being present and close to those who are hurt, suffering, and marginalized. A church whose hearts break at whatever breaks the heart of God. Death, division, and despair are not the tenets of our faith. Only new and abundant life is found in the transformative power of Jesus Christ. Dean Crozier Nestlehutt and I are working on a vigil later this week, and that will be followed by concrete, prayerful, spiritual, and active ways we can stand at the foot of the cross with the suffering and poor of the world.

We are not of the political realm, the intellectual, social, or philosophical realm. We are the church, and our lives must bring to fullness the salvation of a sinful and broken world through realizing the fullness of the Gospel. When Jesus stepped into the synagogue, his words cannot be ignored: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free.” (Luke 4:17-18)

There is historical power in the Gospel, and we will attempt to live into Christ's call for a new earth where the values are known as justice, love, community, freedom, and life. We are a transcendent people who will transcend hate and violence. This diocese, the Bishop, and God's people will stand at the foot of the cross where God's love radiates out into the world. When we do so, we will find salvation in the one we follow and proclaim: "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? (Matt 16:24-26)

We will pick up the cross not of our choosing, but the cross with our names on it. "All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. Then he began to speak to them. 'The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!'" (Luke 4:21)

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script. The signature begins with a small cross symbol, followed by the name "Daniel" in a large, flowing script. To the right of the name, the Roman numeral "XVI" is written. The signature concludes with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish.

Bishop Daniel