



*Bishop Craig Loya*

Fellow Americans,

Things are impossibly hard in Minnesota right now. We are a state that feels under siege, and the people of this place are doing everything possible to resist. The campaign of reckless brutality being waged by the federal government has been well documented, including today's killing of a citizen who was restrained and immobilized. The clear evidence of what's happening exposes cartoonish lies from federal agencies that echo the most cynical propaganda machines in human history. The images are clear, and we are told, don't believe what you see.

But there is also something much more powerful, and not as widely reported, happening. We are mobilizing for revolutionary love. Vast networks of care, compassion, and solidarity, organized by churches to deliver food and supplies to those who cannot leave their homes. People are documenting the violence being used against us in a way that puts their own lives at risk. People are standing guard outside schools and daycares, and at bus stops to protect our children from real risks of harm. Others are taking turns watching each others' kids stuck in online learning because some schools aren't safe. Health care workers are bravely caring for people in hospitals that also are no longer safe, and risking being targets of arrest and detention for protecting the patients. A rich web of underground care and hidden love is taking deep root, and it's amazing to think what fruit that might bear when this occupation ends.

Minnesotans cannot do more than we are doing. Here are a few ways you can help.

- 1) Please flood your US senators with appeals to not to further fund ICE, by rejecting a bill the US House has already passed. Please flood all your members of congress with calls for deescalation in Minnesota; for ICE, Customs and Border Patrol, and other federal agents to leave Minnesota now; and to write and pass legislation that requires proper and extensive training for all those working for the federal government in our states and local communities.
- 2) Organize peaceful demonstrations in your cities and communities. We live in a very big country, and it's possible what's happening in Minnesota feels removed. What is happening to us here is happening to all of America, and it is eroding the last remaining threads of our democracy. Minneapolis and Minnesota have been a model for the entire country over these past two weeks, with tens of thousands standing together in deep cold to peacefully protest the violence being used against us.
- 3) You can help nurture the Diocese of Minnesota's primary engine of underground care and subversive love by donating to Casa Maria, which is providing much-needed food, supplies, and community to those rightfully afraid to go about their daily lives amidst the violence. Some of Casa Maria's leaders are also working with a diocesan team to help families locate and access members who have been taken by ICE. Donations do real and immediate work to help people in Minnesota that are in real need of help.

The greatest danger we face right now is not the very real threat to our safety. It's not even the erosion of democracy. The greatest threat we face as a nation is the assault being waged on hope.

We must not give in to despair. We must not be consumed by the very justified anger we feel. The only way hatred can be effectively resisted is doubling down on love. The only way darkness can be defeated is light. The only way the forces of death can be overcome is by embracing, every moment of every day, God's unstoppable life.