



Office of the Archbishop
1340 Cathedral Lane, Halifax, NS B3H 2Z1
902 420 0717 - bishopsoffice@nspeidiocese.ca

To: To Clergy and People of the Diocese

Date: April 20th, 2020

"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'" John 20:19

Dear Friends,

For more than a month we have been experiencing a time of anxiety and fear. The life of nearly everyone in our country has been changed to some extent as we physically distance in order to fight the Covid 19 pandemic. In recent weeks there has been a growing sense of sadness as seniors in our province have succumbed to the disease. We have been praying for those who provide essential services in this time, especially those who work in senior's care facilities. In the past week this focus has been on the residents and staff of the Northwood Care Home in Halifax where 5 residents have died.

In addition to all we have been experiencing, the events of Saturday and Sunday in northern and central Nova Scotia have been almost too much to bear. There are few details of this mass shooting at this point, although we do know that at least 17 people are dead in communities over a 90 kilometer swathe of the province. The death toll has continued to rise as the investigation continues. The names of those killed are beginning to be released by family members but there are many, many unanswered questions at this time. The magnitude of violence in an area better known for peace and beauty, is mind numbing. In a province this small, the web of relationship means that much of our population has been directly affected. In the face of this tragedy we can do no more than grieve, to share in sorrow and to reach out by whatever means available to us at this time, to support one another.

We are in the season of Easter. It is a time when we remember that evil and death do exist and run through our society and culture. It is also a time when we remember that life and love ultimately triumph over evil and death even though this is not immediately apparent. We pray for those whose lives have been so deeply impacted. The families of those killed and injured, friends and neighbours, the first responders, those called to offer care and support. May we be the means of life and love in this time when we have experienced evil and death.

A Collect Prayer for a Day of Gun Violence

O God, you who are the glorious Lord of life, of death, of resurrection;

We ask you in the Name of your Son who is the Prince of Peace;

Make us mindful of your eternal presence of life in the midst of shock and grief;

We lift before you all affected by this weekend's mass shooting in our Province Nova Scotia: the dead, the wounded -- all who know and love the victims; the RCMP and all first responders, all government leaders. Keep our communities already reeling from the shock of the reality of Covid-19 safe. Draw us ever closer together.

May we be a continuing source of comfort and care to one another.

May this be so to your glory so that the work of your redeeming, transforming love may be known to all.

We pray this in the Name of the Holy One who enters into fearful, hurting lives; the One who says, "Peace be with you. My peace I give you." Amen. Fr. Douglas Beck

Give Us Hope

When evil darkens our world, give us light. When despair numbs our souls, give us hope. When we stumble and fall, lift us up. When doubts assail us, give us faith. When nothing seems sure, give us trust. When ideals fade, give us vision. When we lose our way, be our guide! That we may find serenity in Your presence, and purpose in doing Your will. Amen. John D. Rayner

*Jesus, our dead and living friend,
We walk the ways of death and life holding fear in one hand and courage in the other.
Come find us when we are locked away.
Come enliven us.
Come bless us with your peace.
Because you are the first day of creation and all days of creation.
Amen.* The Corrymeela Community

In peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read '+ Ron Cutler'.

The Most Reverend Ron Cutler
Archbishop of Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island