

**The Rev. Christine Love Mendoza**  
**The Church of the Good Shepherd**  
**June 2, 2020**

*As the prophet Micah wrote, "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:8)*  
*In the name of our loving, liberating, and life-giving God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

This year, the fires of Pentecost have been like a refining fire, burning away our impurities – our collective sin of selfishness and lack of love for our neighbors – and it seems that no one will escape its heat. It is with a torched and blistered heart that I address you today.

I have never understood my ministry as your Rector and priest to be a political one. I believe strongly that our Anglican tradition is founded on allowing for many differing, and often conflicting, opinions. While we may disagree on many things, it is not our opinions and agreements that make us one body, rather it is our prayer and worship. And, most importantly, it is our love.

It is love that is the foundation upon which our community is built, because it is love that our Savior taught, preached, lived, and died for. To follow Christ is to take up one's cross – the cross of love – and to bear it *fully* as we follow the One who lived it *completely*. To bear Christ's cross of love is not an easy task – it often sits uncomfortably on our shoulders – but it is the primary truth illustrated by the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through our bearing this cross of love, we live out the truth of being children of God.

Being created in the image of God and as children of God, we are necessarily brothers and sisters to each other and to all people. We are all related and connected to each other. The sufferings imposed on one is necessarily felt, in one way or the other, by all.

Our President's actions last evening were an affront to our church, our faith, our constitutional liberty, and to our God, who loves all of His children. To order militarized police to fire rubber bullets and tear gas upon peaceful protestors – legally speaking the truth of injustice at the hands of law enforcement – is immoral. To do so in order to clear the way so that the President may pose for a photo opportunity in front of one of our churches, while holding up our sacred text as a prop, is beyond offensive. His actions desecrate our faith and are an insult to all Christians.

Our nation is suffering and is in crisis. We must respond to our neighbors in love. These are the two things that I know.

Through the events of the past few months – from the continued acts of injustice by law enforcement toward people of color to the viral pandemic and attendant economic crisis which, while imposing sufferings upon us all, has had a disproportionate impact on African Americans and Latinos – centuries of injustice and systemic racism has been laid bare. It is our duty to bear each other in love and to bear the truth of this moment. If one of us can't breathe because of injustice, we all feel the lack of oxygen.

Yesterday, the Church celebrated the Feast of the Visitation. On this feast day, we recall when Mary, now pregnant by the Holy Spirit, visits her cousin Elizabeth, who is also miraculously pregnant with John. When Elizabeth sees her, she is filled with the Holy Spirit and her baby leaps with joy in her womb. She then prophetically proclaims that Mary is carrying the Messiah, the Lord, and blesses her. Mary's response to Elizabeth is a song of praise often called the *Magnificat* and it speaks of God's redeeming and reconciling work in creation.

Today, I ask that we remember that, like Mary, we are *theotokos*, or bearers of God. Like Mary, each and every one of us is called to bear God in our lives, in our hearts, and in the world. Being created in the image of God, means that we bear God within us in a special way. It also means that as we bear this image upon our whole being, we are charged with the responsibility to live our lives faithfully and in integrity with this God-image.

In the news this morning, I heard said that *hopelessness is the enemy of justice*. We must retain our Christian hope that God is, indeed, alive in the world now, today, remaking, redeeming, and recreating the world. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters and as hopeful Christians, we must continue to strive for justice and mercy, and walk humbly with our God –who always walks with those who suffer.

Today, I ask that you join me in prayer. That together, we hold the whole human family in our hearts, but especially the lowly, the hungry, the lost, the frightened, the hopeless, and the marginalized. Today, let us pray for the salvation of our souls and let us work together to heal our divisions, and lift up those who have been subject to centuries of systemic racism. Let us listen to their stories. Let us bear their pain in love.

I leave you with the powerful words of Mary's song of hope and promise of God's redeeming and reconciling work.

"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

*(Luke 1: 46b-55)*

Amen.