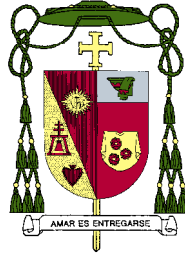


DIOCESE OF SAN BERNARDINO



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

November 12-13, 2016

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We have just come through what is probably the most divisive and bitter presidential campaign in memory. Our democratic process has concluded and we offer our prayers for our new President-Elect Mr. Donald Trump. We ask God to guide him in his leadership that he will make decisions for the **Common Good** of the people and always recognizing the **Dignity of Every Human Life**.

Some of us are elated with the outcome of the election, feeling that the new government will create opportunities and better serve the people. Some of us are feeling angry, sad or fearful, based on the rhetoric of the campaign. Public demonstrations are taking place in some communities, and we respect the right of the people to peaceful protest. At the same time, we condemn any unlawful, violent or destructive behavior done in the name of protest.

As we work through these many emotions, we are called to enter a process of healing and mending of divisions. We do this because the most important aspect of our identity is that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. We are one community. We are the Body of Christ.

Our healing process includes an urgent need to stand in solidarity with our migrant and undocumented brothers and sisters, and other groups who are experiencing fear due to statements made by President-Elect Trump during his campaign. As a faith community, we firmly stand in solidarity with these communities. We are committed to journey with them and work so that their dignity and human rights may be respected.

In the Old Testament, God reminded his people who felt threatened and fearful: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you...I will strengthen you and help you" (Is. 41, 10). I would also like to remind you, our undocumented brothers and sisters that you are not alone; your Bishop and your faith community are with you. We ask you to hold on to hope. There are legal processes in this nation that need to be respected and any action that may affect you will take time. Any possible changes will not occur before January 21 of 2017. Do not be afraid for you are not alone. We are with you.

We entrust ourselves to the Virgin Mary, Mother of migrants and refugees, and to Saint Joseph, who experienced the bitterness of emigration to Egypt.

In Christ,



Most Reverend Gerald R. Barnes
Bishop of the Diocese of San Bernardino

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