



## A LETTER FROM THE EPISCOPAL BISHOPS IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Beloved in Christ,

Like all Californians, we are watching with great concern the events unfolding around immigration protests in Los Angeles. We are deeply concerned about the ICE raids and about the potential for violence arising from the deployment of National Guard troops and Marines to the Los Angeles area. We are concerned that military deployments will escalate the confrontations unnecessarily, and worry that all of our regions in California may be subject to future deployments that heighten tensions rather than resolving them.

Bishop John Harvey Taylor, the Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles, has posted on social media this past weekend about what is happening in Los Angeles and his interpretation of the ways in which local officials, law enforcement, federal agencies, and protesters are all interacting. He expressed deep pain and anger as fourteen people in one single Episcopal congregation in that diocese were detained by ICE on Friday. Certainly, we as Episcopalians are shocked and saddened when any of our own are removed from our beloved community.

In all six of our dioceses, people are concerned and fearful about the denial of due process for those detained and the potential for ICE raids targeting beloved community institutions and people working to support their families. People feel angry and threatened that the haven they sought in our communities is no longer safe. US citizens and legal residents feel deep grief at losing beloved friends and family members. Children whose parents are deported face uncertain futures. In our churches, we strive to protect our members who are at risk.

Our Baptismal Covenant asks us, "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being (BCP p. 417)?" This question is a direct and ongoing call to us as persons who follow Christ to live out our calling opposed to injustice, to violence of any kind, and to stand up where human beings are not treated as we would treat a child of God. This question needs to be foremost in our thoughts as we consider our response to the situation in Los Angeles.

In the Episcopal Church, we uphold a proud tradition of advocating for civil rights and supporting the vulnerable in our society. We stand for fierce love and for justice that

leads to peace, as well as societal practices that preserve human dignity. With God's help, we will speak and pray on behalf of all in this situation.

Bishop Taylor has asked for our prayers for Los Angeles, and we invite all our dioceses to pray for the unfolding situation there as well as for peace and justice in all our communities. We ask that you join us in praying:

“Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (BCP p. 823).”

In Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Lucinda Ashby  
Episcopal Bishop of El Camino Real

The Rt. Rev. David Rice  
Episcopal Bishop of San Joaquin

The Rt. Rev. Austin K. Rios  
Episcopal Bishop of California

The Rt. Rev. Susan Brown Snook  
Episcopal Bishop of San Diego

The Rt. Rev. John Harvey Taylor  
Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles

The Rt. Rev. Megan Traquair  
Episcopal Bishop of Northern California