



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 26, 2026

My Dear Brothers and Sisters united through the Word of God in the Bible; united through the Sacred Tradition handed on through the millennia by the Apostles and the great teachers, the men and women Doctors of the Church and of the Christian Faith; united as we are by one faith, one Lord, one baptism, Peace be to you and to all people!

We are deeply troubled, or ought to be deeply troubled by the tensions, cruelties, killings and merciless demonstrations of raw power that have been raging throughout the world. The slaughtering invasion of Ukraine by the Russian military; the atrocities of war in the Holy Land and Gaza; repressive governments, starving and battered children and the endless war of words that call for division through might rather than exemplifying the dignity of a unified civilization of peace.

These very same sorrows and bewildering decompositions of a nation's grandeur are now, once again, raising the lance to pierce the side of the Prince of Peace. As the soldier in Saint Mark's Gospel said, only too late, "Truly, this was the Son of God." In the struggle for justice, when all reason is abandoned, the dreadful words of Pontius Pilate ought to be remembered: "Quid est veritas!" / "What is Truth?" "Take him and crucify him yourselves." The ability or willingness to apply reason to arrive at just judgement, when abandoned by lawful authority, leads to arbitrary application of law and the resultant tragedy is unavoidable, as we are seeing today.

Presently our nation is engaged in a struggle that has actually gone on for generations. Reliance on unjust and arbitrary laws governing immigration has at last come to the boiling point of human intolerance, giving rise to governmental force and fear and the reciprocal societal uprising against this assault on reason and human dignity. This "all or nothing" approach to a societal dilemma is nothing less than a grave sin against God and neighbor. As with all sin, acknowledgement of personal fault that leads to humility and repentance is the way to repair the effects of evil that has been committed. Truly, this is the expectation of the Son of God. The lance having been thrust as the penultimate act, the Resurrection is the final act of reconciliation.

Families and individuals, businesses, churches and schools have become vulnerable to every kind of assault. The fabric of our political life is being torn by division and, in some cases, even fatal violence. Presently, those who have immigrated to our country find themselves trapped by generations of promises or hopes that were ultimately based upon a badly broken and unjust immigration system. The situation is not new, but the evidence of the evil of its benign neglect is now manifested in the worst possible ways.

With a small voice that is mine, but with the strong conviction of Faith and Reason, I turn to everyone, every man, woman, boy and girl, every believer and non-believer, those who love us and those who hate us (as Saint Basil the Great prays in the Liturgy attributed to him), every member of every political party, every independent or progressive to acknowledge the evil that has gripped a nation that is endowed by its Creator with certain inalienable rights. Acknowledge, apologize with sincere humility and compunction. Restore peace through reconciliation and in all earnestness, think clearly to provide the means of a peacefully engaged life. It is our duty to respond as citizens and as committed Christians who are willing to do the right thing so that wrong paths can be set right.

Our Catholic Faith sets the process in motion through what we call the CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY and the SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY. They might not be easily remembered, so here they are for everybody to try hard to put them to work. We can set things right. We can figure out the better way. We can be our best selves. Saint Paul says: "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself." (*Philippians 3:20,21*) So let us all try to be recognized as good citizens of the Kingdom above all else and experience the transformation in our nation and our state that, without anger, cruelty or bloodshed we truly desire.

The Corporal Works of Mercy: Feed the hungry; Give drink to the thirsty; Shelter the homeless; Clothe the naked; Visit the sick; Bury the dead. These are all found in St. Matthew's Gospel as coming from the very words of Jesus!

The Spiritual Works of Mercy: Admonish the sinner; Instruct the ignorant; Counsel the doubtful; Comfort the sorrowful; Bear wrongs patiently; Forgive all injuries; Pray for the living and the dead. These are all found in the Bible, too; they are the very things that Jesus actually did throughout his earthly ministry, right through the healings, miracles, the visit to Lazarus' tomb where Jesus wept, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

This letter is somewhat long and if you noticed its salutation even that is quite lengthy. I purposely wrote in that style since I am composing this letter to you on the Feast of Saints Timothy and Titus, to whom Saint Paul wrote letters with greetings similar to the above. In fact, as I close this letter, I will quote a portion from Saint Paul's second letter to Timothy:

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingly power: proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching.

For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine,
but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity
will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth
and will be diverted to myths. But you, be self-possessed
in all circumstances; put up with hardship;
perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry." (2Timothy 1-5)

With these words of the Apostle Paul, I ask you to remain faithful in prayer and in charity.
Love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength and love your
neighbor as yourself. May God reward every good deed and turn away every evil thought from
the minds of his children. May peace reign on the whole earth and in our nation and our great
state of New Hampshire. Pax vobis. Peace to you all.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Peter Libasci, D.D.", preceded by a small cross symbol.

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, D.D.
Bishop of Manchester