



+ November 4, 2024

To All My Brothers and Sisters,

Our nation faces challenges and difficulties beyond what we ever imagined. This new moment in history gives us an opportunity to ask who we are and what future we want. Regardless of the outcome of this election, we have a choice to make.

I invite each one of us to defeat divisiveness with understanding, rancor with amicability, hatred with compassion, mistrust with greater willingness to listen. Let us counter the downward spiral with renewed efforts to respect the diversity and dignity of each of our neighbors.

All of these lofty goals are possible when we live out our gospel values. St. Paul told the Philippians: "Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, each looking out not for his own interests, but also everyone for those of others." (2: 3-4)

We have the opportunity to shape the world we live in. Each of us plays a part. Each of us can make decisions every day to recognize the good in people and bring more love, joy, and unity into the world.

It should not be a surprise that I am greatly inspired by Pope Francis, who wrote in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, "In this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity."

In his most recent encyclical, *Dilexit Nos*, our Holy Father reflects that our world appears to be losing its heart. The remedy is for each of us to reflect upon the love that is ours in Jesus Christ, and to live this love more fully in our lives.

It is this universal call for unity and love that I hope we not only hear but act upon.

Sadly, we no longer know our neighbor. We've lost our focus on people — on each other. We've become isolated and unwilling to have authentic encounters and dialog with those who are different from us — whether that difference is the color of our skin, where we come from or our political points of view. We must remember we are all brothers and sisters. Our diversity is what makes our community, our nation, and our world beautiful.

We need to break out of our silos, get to know one another, recognize the good in each other and see how we are interconnected. This is how we unite and begin to shape the future.

It starts with each of us. We can no longer complain and let frustrations fester. Instead, each of us must act – every day. Every day we can make choices that bring more love, more joy, more patience, more understanding and more tolerance in our world. I encourage each of us to think about this. How can we start with our family, our friends, our neighbors, and the larger community?

The election results will inevitably evoke bitterness, anger, hatred, and unrest. You can feel this way, or you can choose differently and focus on compassion and love. You can recognize that divisiveness is not the answer for our future. Love is the answer. Love for our neighbors – for each other – is the answer. How can you spread more love in the world? This is the only way we'll rebuild our communities and our nation.

So this election you have a choice: Will you spread love? Will you spread joy? Will you care for your neighbor? Will you see the good in each person? Will you help unite our communities and build the future we all want?

I pray we will choose love and help spread the love of our Lord in the world. God has only one family – the human family – and each of us has a role to play in strengthening these bonds to build a better society.

As always, I remain,

In the Heart of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul D. Etienne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL  
Archbishop of Seattle