



+ November 3, 2020

To All My Brothers and Sisters,

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

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 recently 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."

It is this universal call for unity 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 siloes and take the time to get to know one another. We must recognize the good in each other and see how we truly are all interconnected. This is how we unite and begin to shape the future we want to see.

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 tomorrow 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 to our Father that 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 written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

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