

July 8, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Province IV,

We are reeling from the most recent news of violence in Dallas, Texas and, indeed, for the “way too many” incidences of the past month. As we write, many of our Province IV youth and their leaders are in South Africa as part of “Lift Every Voice,” learning, loving, and living a different culture. In spite of terrorist warnings from our State Department, they marched forward to share the love of Christ and to do their part to promote peace and brotherhood in what feels at this moment to be a very broken world. Isn’t it ironic, isn’t it horrifying, that while our young people’s lives are being changed a world away, lives in America are being changed, once again, by tragedy, by evil, by our failures to love the Lord, our God, with all our hearts, minds and souls; to love our neighbors as ourselves; and to respect the dignity of every human being.

**We can weep – and we do; we can grieve – and we do; or we can act in the world as the Body of Christ.** Generally speaking, we Episcopalians are “activists” – and that is not a dirty word. Not to diminish in any way the tragic occurrences elsewhere, but Baton Rouge is in our Episcopal province; Orlando is in our province; Charleston is in our province – and the list grows. These are our “next door” neighbors, and by helping them, **we can model ways for others to help.**

Province IV is the largest, fastest growing and, arguably, the most active province of The Episcopal Church. We have the resources and the faith to affect change. **This letter is a call to action, a challenge for creativity, a plea for prayers.** Our provincial Synod is coming up next June and, while there is much that we can do before then, Synod will give us an opportunity to explore our role in working together to make a difference in this crazy world. Between now and then, we will have another grant opportunity with \$20,000 in provincial funds being available in 2017, and \$25,000 in 2018. Wherever you are in Province IV, whatever diocese or parish, please begin engaging your mind and others’ now to consider bold ideas for using these funds and our provincial networks for doing God’s work. **Consider ways of joining forces, working collaboratively to make life better for all God’s children.**

Please join us in praying for victims of violence, of bigotry, of injustice, of all evil; especially for the families of those recently killed in Dallas, in Falcon Heights, in Baton Rouge, in Orlando, in Charleston. Brothers and Sisters, fervently pray in the name of our loving and forgiving Lord. As God said to Joshua: **“Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”** Share that thought.

Peace to you and love,

Angela Daniel  
President, Province IV

+Don Johnson  
Vice-President, Province IV  
President, Province IV House of Bishops