



The Episcopal  
Diocese of San Joaquin  
*The Central Third of California*

June 2, 2020

Sisters and Brothers of EDSJ,

Yesterday, we paused and remained silent as we joined with millions in a National Day of Mourning. The intention of the day was to remember and grieve over 107,000 people no longer with us in the US and over 371,000 worldwide. And we are painfully aware that those numbers continue to increase daily.

**And so, we remember and we grieve.**

We have remained consistent in EDSJ regarding our response to this horrific pandemic. We have identified that public health will always take priority over economics. We have acknowledged that communal and theological responsibility will always supersede individual rights. And we have named that the very best way we can ensure care of and for one another is by taking care of ourselves through adherence to protocols and precautions.

**And so, we remember and we grieve.**

Tired and weary and grieving we are. We have been engulfed by COVID-19. It has redefined and refigured most aspects of our lives. It has taken life from us, both literally and figuratively. And as a result, we will never be the same.

**And so, we remember and we grieve.**

And yesterday, in-and-around our pausing and remaining silent, we were yet again confronted by images of protestation. Protests continue to occur throughout many of our cities from Minneapolis to Los Angeles to New York to Seattle to Washington D.C. and innumerable places in between. And the images prompt us to grieve even more deeply. The grieving about which I write comes from hearing chants: "I can't breathe." The grieving takes place as we see a memorial, a chalk drawing on a wall surrounded by flowers and people kneeling in quietness. The grieving occurs as we see businesses looted, vehicles torched and unmitigated despondency and rage on display. Let's be clear, the violence in our streets must stop. This violence and opportunistic destruction will not bring solace to our rage or despondency or grief.

The violence must stop. However, what must continue are the peaceful and prophetic protests declaring that brutality, inequality and injustice have no place on our streets or in our lives. And so, grieve we must. And may our grief lead us to peaceful action, to peaceful change.

**And so, we remember and we grieve.**

Yesterday, we paused and remained silent. There is a time and place to pause and to remain silent and there is a time and place to act and to give voice. Now is our time to act and to give voice. The other pandemic in our midst must also stop. Racism has no place on our streets or in our lives.

**And so, we remember and we grieve.**

Remain silent we must not, if we dare follow Jesus. Remain silent we must not, if we dare live out our Baptismal Covenant:

*“Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?”*

**“I will, with God’s help.”**

The very breath was taken from George Floyd on Monday, May 25. On May 31, six days later, the Church celebrated Pentecost, God breathing God’s very breath into God’s People.

Sisters and Brothers of EDSJ, George Floyd wasn’t the first person of color to have his breath taken from him. Unfortunately, the list is far too long to recount. We can say this with absolute certainty, we are called to breathe our breath, the very breath of God into this grieving world in which we live. And we are called to act and to give voice to ensure that no breath is ever taken away again.

**And so, we remember and we grieve.**

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a small cross followed by a stylized, cursive 'D'.

+David