



Message from the Bishop
to the Clergy and People
of the Diocese of Southeast Florida

6 September 2017

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we await the impact of Hurricane Irma, Kate and I want to assure you all of our prayers and encouragement. We face a dangerous storm, and there is justifiable anxiety and fear about the storm itself, and its aftermath. Our sisters and brothers in Texas and Louisiana have just endured what we are now facing, and we know the real dangers.

Our first priority is always the safety of people. Please do all that you can to ensure that you, your families, and your people are as safe as you can be. If there is a mandatory evacuation for your area, you are under an obligation to obey it. By now I know that you will have begun implementing your personal and community emergency plans, and maintaining communication for as long as possible is essential. Please ensure that you can communicate with each other, so that we know either that people are safe, or that they need help.

There will be much to say and do after the storm has passed and we know the extent of the damage. I know that we shall all do in our power to help each other. Those who can help us, especially Church Insurance and ERD, are ready to step in as soon as possible. We know that we are supported by the prayers of our fellow Anglicans from around the country and across the globe. The Presiding Bishop has sent me the assurance of his prayers and support, which he asked me to pass on to everyone in our diocese, and I have had many other expressions of love and concern for us.

In the inevitable anxiety that we face, let us never lose touch with God and with the communion that binds us all together in this diocese with each other and with our Lord Jesus Christ. These bonds are eternal, and they are the true foundation of our life. Let us pray for each other, all those affected by this storm wherever they may be, and for all those, especially our first responders, who even now are caring for those in need.

Please be safe, and know that Kate joins me in sending our love and concern for you all.

With every blessing.

+Peter

O God of heaven and earth, our God who carries our lives and the lives of our whole community in your hands, be with us in the peril of Hurricane Irma. Help us to place our anxieties and fears into those same caring hands, knowing in faith that your will for us is life and everlasting good. Send your holy angels to watch over us and guard us. May they spread their holy wings to give us shelter against the storm. For you alone, O God, are all good, all life, all love, and that love is for us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(A prayer by the Reverend Thomas Weitzel, adapted)