



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

Monday, 11 September 2017

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we assess the damage of Hurricane Irma throughout our diocese over these next days, let us continue to keep in our prayers all those for whom this storm has been a devastation, both in our region and elsewhere. For those of us who suffered less, our sacrifice will be one of solidarity and practical help to those who have suffered more.

Over the past several days, as I have witnessed, and been the recipient myself, of acts of real kindness and generosity in community, I am reminded of the great gift of the Church. We have all been reminded of the truth that the Church is not first and foremost an institution; it is the living Body of Christ, which has an eternal existence, and an eternal vocation to gather us and give us life in Christ. The Spirit enlivens the Church to action, and we are being surrounded by so many.

I have received the assurance of prayers and practical support from across our Episcopal Church, but also from our worldwide Anglican Communion, and other Churches, too. God has given us the gifts we need for a full and complete life in the Gospel, and these gifts become obvious especially at times like this.

We are working hard to assess damage and to get help to those who need it. While we have heard from many congregations and clergy, we are still waiting to hear from our folks in the Keys and other parts of the diocese that have sustained greater damage.

I have asked the clergy to be safe over the next few days, and make assessments as you are able. Please take no risks, as there is still potential danger. When we know the extent of the damage, we can begin the processes for repair and reconstruction, and we have access to emergency funds from various sources. Please let Cris Valdes in the Bishop's Office know, and we shall help you get what you need.

Each morning for the next several days, the clergy and I shall be on a conference call to check in together, and we shall send out instructions to the clergy on how to join the call.

Kate and I are well and safe, and are grateful to Saint Vincent de Paul Seminary for their gracious hospitality to us. There is limited power here, so I can remain in touch with the senior staff and our leadership.

Please let us continue in prayer, even as the work of cleaning up and re-establishing our life begins. Thank you for your faithfulness and devotion, and please know that you are all in my daily prayers and constant affection.

With every blessing,

+Peter

A prayer after the storm

Loving Lord, we pray to you, trusting in your mercy and knowing that your steadfast love endures forever. Look with mercy on those who have been harmed or displaced by Hurricane Irma. Grant us your strength to meet the days ahead, and give your peace which passes all understanding and new hope in the resurrection to all in any need. Be the strength of those who are able to give aid, that we may be your hands and heart for our sisters and brothers. And give us all the assurance of your presence even in this time, so that we may rest secure in your promise of hope and life shown to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(From the New York Synod ELCA, adapted)